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THE *Blue Jay*

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Snowy Owl

Photo by Robert R. Taylor

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REGINA, SASK.

BLUE JAY CHATTER

Saskatchewan's First Resources Conference

More than 300 delegates, including many from beyond Saskatchewan's borders, met in Saskatoon, January 20 and 21, 1964, for Saskatchewan's first Resources Conference. I attended as a representative of the Saskatchewan Natural History Society. We talked about our natural resources and how we can better utilize them without depleting them and jeopardizing our future.

All delegates were together for the introductory addresses the first morning and the final speeches and conclusions on the last afternoon. The rest of the time we were divided into five sections: land, water, forests, minerals and recreation. I was a member of the recreation group. Papers from all sessions have been printed and I have copies of them which members may borrow.

Mr. I. K. Fox, Resources for the Future, Inc., Washington, D.C., gave the keynote address. He emphasized that the world population has doubled since 1900 and will double again before the year 2000. We must consider the needs of this growing population and we must preserve our resources at a level conducive to good living. Mr. Fox is optimistic about our ability to provide food but thinks we will have real problems governing our large cities, finding occupations for our unemployed and using our leisure time. He warned us that threats to our physical environment are already here, e.g. water and air pollution, pesticides, and general deterioration of our landscape. He stated that we must develop new regulations, such as charging cities for the wastes and detergents released into our waters so that they will control and reduce such wastes. Mr. Fox emphasized that our physical environment is part of our natural resources and that we must preserve and enhance this environment.

Mr. R. G. Young, Assistant Deputy Minister, Department of Natural Resources, Regina, was the chairman of the Recreation sector. The first speaker was Mr. W. W. Mair, Chief of the National Parks Service, Ottawa. He described the great increase in the number of visitors to our parks and said that most of them came to see wildlife. Wildlife, therefore, is very important in tourism which was described as the second largest earner of dollars for Canada. Since wild animals and plants require land there is naturally some conflict of interests, but farmers are not antagonistic to wildlife if the damage they do to crops and property is paid for. It was emphasized by Mr. Mair and by several discussants that not enough of the revenue from the tourist industry is being spent on wildlife research, and on salaries for biologists needed in this important industry, and that almost no pamphlets are being produced. Saskatchewan's climate is rigorous. We can make our province a better place in which to live by keeping our rivers and lakes clean and by conservation of scenic areas and protection of native plants and animals.

Mr. W. M. Baker, Park and Recreation Planner, Toronto, told us that we should examine areas carefully and try to capitalize on their unique features. For example, there is no grassland park in all of Canada. Our government plans to develop such a park, and as natural history people we should urge them to make the park as large and impressive as possible. We want to see wide grassy areas with no signs of human habitation (any shelters or accommodation provided could be inconspicuous or hidden in a valley). We would like to see native animals in the area. Grazing by domestic animals should be rigidly controlled so that this can become truly a park where man can enjoy a grasslands environment. The establishing of such a park would provide wisely for recreational use of one of our most attractive "natural resources."

—GEORGE F. LEDINGHAM.

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Status of Hawks and Owls Under Manitoba's New Wildlife Act

Manitoba's new Wildlife Act, which came into force September, 1963, makes a further contribution toward the protection of birds of prey in Canada. Gordon Smith has reviewed the sections of the Act which provide this protection and commented on them for the Natural History Society in Manitoba's Newsletter, No. 6, from which we quote:

"Schedule B of the Act lists the following as Protected Birds: Turkey Vulture, Accipiters (Short-winged Hawks), Buteos or Buzzard Hawks, Eagles, Harriers (Marsh Hawk), Osprey, Falcons, and Owls. In extending protection to all birds of prey the Act recognizes the futility of designating these and other predatory birds as "good" or "bad", a fact that biologists have long since known. Naturally a landowner can protect his property from predation but a bird so killed must be reported to a conservation officer within ten days. Failure to do so is an offence under the Act.

"In addition, other large birds such as the Raven, White Pelican and Double-crested Cormorant are protected as well as many smaller species not covered by the Migratory Birds Convention Act. The only birds **not** protected are crows, magpies, cowbirds, blackbirds, starling and house (English) sparrows; most of these being economic pests on occasion and well able to take care of themselves.

"Sections specifically referring to birds protected under Schedule B are as follows:

"SECTION 14 reads: 'A person who hunts, kills, or captures a bird of a species or type mentioned, or to which reference is made in Schedule B is guilty of an offence.'

"SECTION 55 reads: 'A person who takes or has possession of or wilfully destroys the nests or eggs of any birds mentioned in Schedule A (includes Game Birds) or Schedule B without a permit to take the nests and eggs of that species or type of bird is guilty of an offence and liable, on summary conviction, to a fine not exceeding two hundred dollars or to imprison-

ment of a term not exceeding one month, or to both such a fine and such imprisonment.'

"SECTION 85 deals in part with penalties imposed upon conviction 'of an offence relating to big game, game birds, or a bird mentioned in Schedule B', the penalty being similar to the above section."

It will be noted that Manitoba's new Act gives more complete protection to hawks and owls than does the present Saskatchewan Game Act. The pertinent section of the latter is quoted here for comparison:

"SECTION 10 (1). Subject to subsection (2) and (3) no person shall hunt, take, shoot at, wound or kill any game bird or any other bird that is wild by nature and in a state of nature, except crows, magpies, blackbirds, grackles, English sparrows and such other birds as may be designated by the Lieutenant Governor in Council, unless he is expressly authorized to do so by this Act or by a subsisting licence or permit issued to him pursuant to this Act.

"(2) Notwithstanding subsection (1), a person may, without such licence or permit, hunt, take, shoot at, wound or kill snowy owls, great-horned owls and goshawks during the period from the first day of November in any year to the last day of March in the following year, both dates inclusive, unless with respect to any such period or any portion of any such period the Lieutenant Governor in Council by order declares that this subsection shall not apply during that period or portion."

Saskatchewan's Act, passed in 1960, extended an important degree of protection to the birds of prey but did not fully implement the recommendation made by the Saskatchewan Natural History Society in a brief presented to the Government in 1959: "Every bird of prey (eagle, osprey, hawk and owl) should be protected, except that the owner of poultry or other domestic animals and the members of his immediate household may destroy by shooting any hawk or owl which is doing real damage to the said poultry or other domestic animals." It

will be seen that the spirit of this recommendation is fully realized in Manitoba's new Act.

The migration of the Snowy Owl in the winter into the plains of Saskatchewan coincides almost exactly with the period for which protection is not afforded it. At the Annual Meeting of the Saskatchewan Natural History Society in October, 1963, a resolution was passed asking the De-

partment of Natural Resources to give protection to the Snowy Owl. Although we are informed by the Wildlife Branch (letter of January 15, 1964) that legislation is not being prepared this year to amend the section of the Game Act pertaining to the protection of hawks and owls, the progress made in Manitoba in acquiring further protection encourages us to continue to work for similar revisions in the Saskatchewan Act.

Hope for Water Birds Subjected to Detergents ?

by J. R. Jowsey, Regina.

A clear example of injury and death of water birds brought about by a concentration of waste detergents in sewage lagoons has been described by Robert W. Nero (*Blue Jay*, Sept., 1963, p. 91). Such undesirable conditions may be decreased soon for chemical engineers seem to be advancing fairly rapidly in the solution of the detergent foam problem in sewage (*Chemical and Engineering News*, March 18, 1963, p.102, and Nov. 4, 1963, p.138). However, this may or may not completely solve the problem of wetting of water birds due to "de-greasing" by detergents. Persons interested in the welfare of our waterfowl might therefore take note of some of the additional features of the problem.

More rapid destruction of waste detergents by microorganisms (resulting in less foam) may be brought about as the result of the use in detergents of new raw materials which are less resistant to biodegradation (*Chem. and Eng. News*, Nov. 4, 1963, p. 138). If such degradation requires an appreciable time (e.g., six hours), however, birds may still be exposed to considerable hazard. The foam problem is already causing a swing away from the alkylbenzene sulfonate-based detergents because of the high resistance to the alkylbenzene sulfonates to biodegradation, and this will no doubt bring about some reductions in the hazards to waterfowl.

Also, if the rate of reduction of foam hazard is more rapid than reduction in "de-greasing" action of detergents, then the problem of foam-

ing may be resolved without any reasonable measure of protection of waterfowl being effected. The "de-greasing" action on waterfowl, and the cleansing action of a soap or a detergent, may be brought about by a substance with a molecular structure which provides a satisfactory combination of radicals with an attraction for water and those with an attraction for fats and oils. It is possible, therefore, that development of a "non-foaming" detergent might bring about only negligible reduction in hazard to waterfowl.

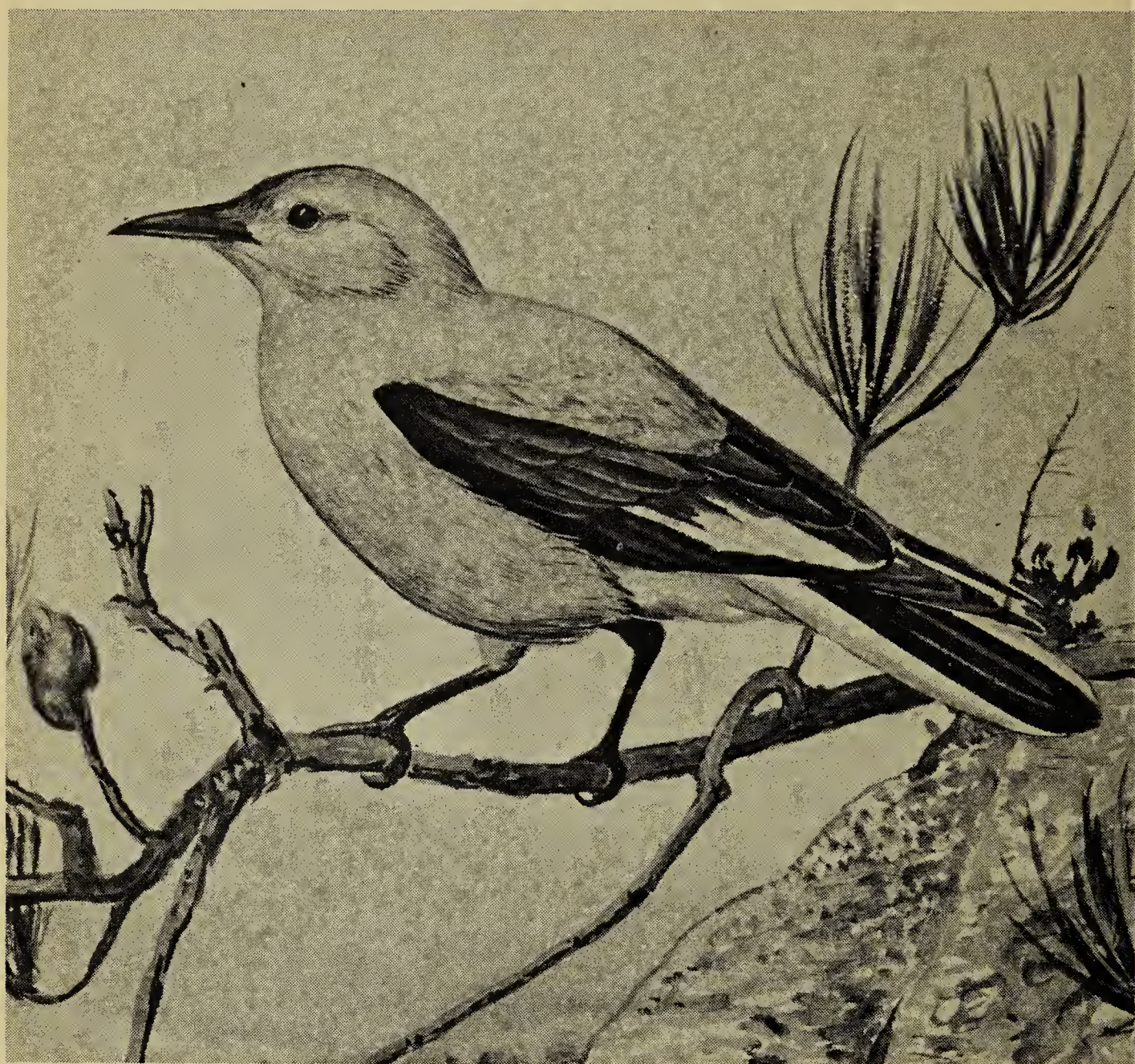
In Saskatchewan the rapid increase in the number of towns with sewer and water services, and the many advantages of the sewage lagoon, will further increase the hazards for waterfowl if control of the "de-greasing" by waste detergents is not maintained. Additional cost due to introduction of a chemical or rapid biological method of degradation in order to ensure relatively complete and rapid destruction of detergent residues may be necessary if our waterfowl are to be protected adequately from hazardous concentrations of surface-active agents in sewage lagoons.

Ed. Note: Dr. James R. Jowsey, a member of our Society, is presently Science Teacher at Thom Collegiate in Regina. He has a special interest in chemistry and biology and has previously carried out research on various problems in the nutrition of domestic animals, including birds.

R. W. Nero's article on waste detergents (*Blue Jay* 21:91) which is referred to in this article has been used as an illustrated feature: "Detergents - Deadly Hazard to Water Birds" in the last issue of *Audubon* (66:26-27), official publication of the National Audubon Society.

Clark's Nutcracker in the Cypress Hills

by Fred G. Bard, Saskatchewan Museum of Natural History, Regina



Fred Lahrman's sketch shows a Clark's Nutcracker (*Nucifraga columbiana*) in the setting where I had the good fortune to see this bird last fall. On October 8, 1963, accompanied by C. S. Brown and by Barry Tether, conservation officer stationed at Cypress Park, I was taking photographs at the "Conglomerate Cliffs" in the west block of the Cypress Hills overlooking Battle Creek. I had just finished adjusting my camera for a picture when I realized that an unusual bird had come to perch briefly on a nearby tree. It did not stay long enough for me to photograph it, but before it flew overhead and off into the Battle Creek Valley, I had a good view of the Clark's Nutcracker—the first I have ever seen in Saskatchewan.

As far as I know, there are only three records of Clark's Nutcracker in Saskatchewan, and these all come—as might be expected, from this southwest corner of the province. When the most recent record, of one seen August 18, 1960 northwest of Ravenscrag, was reported by Robert Folker to the **Blue Jay** (19-79) the two former records were recalled. The first was a specimen (SMNH) collected at Ravenscrag, September 19, 1919 by Spencer Pearse who noted several on his ranch that year. The second observation, also by Pearse, was made six years later in September, 1925, and is recorded by L. B. Potter (1943. Bird notes from Southwestern Saskatchewan. **Can. Field-Nat.**, 57:69-72).

UNUSUAL OCCURRENCE OF A SPRUCE GROUSE

by Mrs. John Hubbard, Grenfell

On November 18, 1963, a Spruce Grouse turned up and stayed with us until December 5 when the cats got it—you might say it is still with us! I gave him 24 hours to live when I first saw him because it lived up to its name of "fcol hen". John had his hands on it once and got a good scolding for the indignity. It stayed near the barn and ate green weeds and grasses, and roosted in trees around the dugout. Shortly before its demise John saw it escape between the claws of a cat. When seen on December 5, it had lost its head and the crop was packed with blades of coarse grass of a slough or marsh type. One wonders how this northern bird happened to come here.

This bird was a combination of black, white, and grey, with no browns. The black on the breast was not too extensive and not in a solid mass but it was definitely there. Some of the bird books show solid black on the breast and on the tail, but this was not the case on this bird. Peterson's Field Guide shows a solid chestnut band across the end of the tail; this bird had just the tips of the tail feathers touched with chestnut. I could see no red comb though I was within 10 feet of the bird and John did not notice it though he was close enough to touch it once. Otherwise this bird fitted the description in the books and John knew them from Kelvington days.

Ed. Note: The Spruce Grouse is ordinarily a resident of the Boreal Forest, the nearest points of which may be found at Duck Mountain Provincial Park and at Riding Mountain National Park in Manitoba. This implies a movement of at least 100 miles south and west to Grenfell, which lies 70 miles east of Regina. The path of this unusual wanderer was probably along the Qu'Appelle Valley where there is a more or less continuous stretch of forest. To our knowledge this is the most southerly record for this species in Saskatchewan, as well as the deepest penetration of the Aspen Parkland. C. Stuart Houston did not record the species though he studied in an area immediately adjacent to the Boreal Forest (1949. The birds of the Yorkton District, Saskatchewan. *Can.*

Field-Nat., 63:215-241). E. Manley Callin has informed us that he knows of no previous records for the Qu'Appelle Valley area. An occasional southward movement within its usual range has been indicated, e.g., J. Dewey Soper notes that a late autumn and winter influx into Riding Mountain from more northern areas appears to account for the larger winter populations (1953. The birds of Riding Mountain National Park, Manitoba, Canada. *Wildl. Mgt. Bull.*, Series 2, No. 6. Mimeo., 54 pp. + photos and map).

SIGHT RECORD OF A DIPPER IN SOUTHWESTERN SASKATCHEWAN

by R. V. Folker, Saskatoon

H. S. Maliepaard, C. Reid, and I recently observed a bird which I believe was a water ouzel or Dipper (*Cinclus mexicanus*). Although according to the Peterson Field Guide this bird is an inhabitant of rushing mountain streams, the conditions under which we saw it on October 25, 1963, on the main street of Maple Creek, were far different. We had just stopped in front of a cafe when I noticed a small, gray, seemingly tail-less bird beside the rear wheel of a parked car. I called the attention of the others to the bird and started groping for my field glasses. Before I located them the bird had been frightened under a car, but it reappeared again for a brief moment before it flew across the street and out of sight. In that brief interval, I noted that the bird teetered when it moved and suddenly it dawned on me what bird it was. Maliepaard must have recognized it at the same instant for our half-surprised, half-excited calls of "dipper!" burst forth almost simultaneously. We were both familiar with this unique species, he having observed it in Montana, and I in Idaho. Gale force winds which were prevalent in the area during the better part of the week, including the day of our observation, could account for the unusual appearance of a Dipper on a town street. Records of the Dipper in Saskatchewan are few in number and the species is not yet authenticated by a specimen. All of the records are from the extreme southwestern corner of the province, in and around the Cypress Hills (see *Blue Jay*, 16:64-65).

YELLOW-BREASTED CHAT AT MOOSE JAW

by John Horton, Moose Jaw

A very boisterous and conspicuous male Yellow-breasted Chat was observed at close hand on June 7, 1963, right across the road from the Swing-Inn in Moose Jaw's River Park. I had been walking south along the first path up the river valley's west wall, past the end of the Swing-Inn parking lot, when a bird's peculiar gurgling whistles and other sounds like "gooh!" first attracted my attention. After searching for about five minutes I gave up and started down the hill, dismissing the noises as those of a Brown Thrasher. But at that moment the bird's cacaphony burst out in a crescendo; I looked back and there it was, right on the tip of a small, dead tree. The distinctive markings of the Chat were unmistakable. A few minutes later, returning the same way I had come, I saw the Chat a few yards farther north. It was quarrelling vigorously with a pair of House Wrens and this behaviour made me suspect that it had been "singing out" a nesting territory. However, on subsequent visits to this spot I was unable to find it, and, in fact, Mrs. C. V. Stokins, who went there shortly after I first saw the Chat, could not find it. Perhaps it was just letting off a little steam on its northward journey. I know of no other records of Yellow-breasted Chats in the Moose Jaw area. It may be of some interest to refer to the observation on June 2, 1963, of a Chat at Roche Percee, near Estevan, reported in the **Blue Jay** (21:93) by Dianne Fahselt.

MOCKINGBIRD AT ELBOW

by G. K. Greene, Elbow

There was a Mockingbird in our yard for a short time late in June in the summer of 1963. It was a few days before we discovered the source of the numerous bird calls that were heard. Since none of our family had ever seen or heard a Mockingbird before it hadn't occurred to us to look for one. We heard it give perfect imitations of crows, meadowlarks, blackbirds, orioles, and other birds which

we knew, as well as others which were unfamiliar to us. On the evening of June 26, a date which my daughter had recorded in her diary, the Mockingbird entertained us till 11:00 p.m. from an elm tree a short distance from our front door. If it stopped for a short rest I would just need to whistle a few notes and it would be away again. As my daughter said, it was slightly eerie to hear crows, etc., in the middle of the night. We had hoped that it would stay here and nest, but as near as we could ascertain it was a lone individual of its kind. Our farm is 11 miles east and four miles north of Elbow.

Ed. Note: A Saskatoon record of the Mockingbird appears in this issue on page 9, and there have been several previous reports in the **Blue Jay** in recent years. The status of this species in Saskatchewan and adjacent regions, actually the whole of the Northern Great Plains, has been studied by Frank H. Brazier. We hope to publish his paper in our next issue. Readers who have records of Mockingbirds, and who have not been in contact with Mr. Brazier, should submit their information to him as soon as possible at Box 1121, Regina.

AN OBSERVATION OF THE WESTERN RACE OF THE GRAY-CROWNED ROSY FINCH

by R. V. Folker, Saskatoon

On October 30, 1963, during a short trip into the rolling country north of Glentworth, Saskatchewan, Bob Caldwell and myself observed a Gray-crowned Rosy Finch (*Leucosticte tephrocotis*) which we identified as the form previously known as Hepburn's Rosy Finch, now considered a subspecies (*L. t. littoralis*), but still illustrated as a distinctive form by Roger Tory Peterson (1961. *A Field Guide to Western Birds*). This colorful bird, which nests above timberline in Alaska and south to northern California, was observed at some length with field glasses as it sat along the roadside about 50 feet from the car. The Gray-crowned Rosy Finch is observed sporadically in Saskatchewan and evidences of its occurrences were summarized in 1963 by Manley Callin (**Blue Jay**, 21: 57). Observers ought to be alert, however, to the possibility of seeing two races, and these should be reported.

The Bird Life at Cree Lake, Summer 1963

by **Fred W. Lahrman**, Saskatchewan Museum of Natural History



Sandy shore of Middleton Island, Cree Lake

Photo by F. W. Lahrman

In the summer of 1963 I spent four delightful weeks at Cree Lake, studying the bird life there, and while the time was late—July 16 to August 13—useful data and 48 specimens were collected. I was joined by Fred G. Bard on August 6. We camped in a DNR patrol cabin on a peninsula running into the lake at the north end, and our trips into the area were made on foot or by boat.

Cree Lake is approximately 180 miles northwest of La Ronge, on the border of the physiographic area known as the Athabasca Plain. It is a large lake generously sprinkled with wooded islands and peninsulas that cradle numerous small lakes. The tree growth of this sandy terrain is predominantly jack pine, with scattered white spruce and river birch, and almost no poplar. When Fred Bard returned to Cree Lake briefly in September (September 25-27) the woods were spangled with gold, but this was the yellow autumn foliage of the birches, not poplars. In mid-

August blueberries were at their height, and by late September, the low-bush cranberries were touched by the first frost. During our few weeks at camp we enjoyed to the full the natural, unspoiled beauty of the place.

When I arrived at Cree Lake, Herring Gull and Common Tern colonies occupied several of the many smaller rocky islands. The gull colonies varied in size from two or three nests to 30 or more, and at this late date the young gulls were hatched and almost one-third grown. All were flying by August 9. The Common Terns had young on the wing, but there were also downy young and some birds still incubating eggs. Besides the Herring Gulls, there were a few wandering Bonaparte's and Mew Gulls and one immature California Gull.

On August 6, while checking a colony of Common Terns on a small rocky islet, we found three Red-breasted Mergansers' nests, hidden in

the dense clumps of grass. In two of these nests the eggs were already hatched and the young gone, but one pipped egg and four downy Red-breasted Merganser young were found in the other (see photo).

A Bald Eagle's nest was found on July 21 with three nearly full-grown young. The nest was in a jack pine on an island in the Cree River. Local Indians reported another one approximately 10 miles farther down the river. A third nest was seen by Mr. Bard on September 27 near Cyril Mahoney's Camp on the Foster Lakes about 80 miles southeast of Cree Lake.

Family groups of Myrtle Warblers, Ruby-crowned Kinglets, Gray Jays, Common Crows, Robins, Slate-colored Juncos, Boreal Chickadees and Spruce Grouse were seen on the larger wooded islands. White-crowned Sparrows were found in the muskegs along the Cree River. Roving bands of Pine Siskins were seen quite frequently.

On August 2 a family of three newly - fledged Olive - sided Fly -

catchers were found. Three Bohemian Waxwings were seen on August 7 and a male was collected which appeared to be a breeding bird.

On Mr. Bard's September trip flocks of Common Loons were seen. Two flocks observed on September 25 consisted of 21 and 48 birds respectively, and on September 26 another group of 14 was seen, all flying westward.

SPECIES RECORDED: Common Loon, Great Blue Heron, Canada Goose, Mallard, Pintail, Green-winged Teal, Ring-necked Duck, Lesser Scaup, Common Merganser, Red-breasted Merganser, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, Bald Eagle, Osprey, Pigeon Hawk, Sparrow Hawk, Spruce Grouse, Spotted Sandpiper, Greater Yellowlegs, Least Sandpiper, Semipalmated Sandpiper, Herring Gull, California Gull, Mew Gull, Bonaparte's Gull, Common Tern, Great Horned Owl, Great Gray Owl (feathers only), Common Nighthawk, Belted Kingfisher, Yellow-shafted Flicker, Pileated Woodpecker, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Black-backed Three-toed Woodpecker, Olive-sided Flycatcher, Gray Jay, Common Raven, Common Crow, Boreal Chickadee, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Robin, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Red-eyed Vireo, Yellow Warbler, Myrtle Warbler, Palm Warbler, Rusty Blackbird, Pine Siskin, White-winged Crossbill, Slate-colored Junco, Chipping Sparrow, White-crowned Sparrow, Swamp Sparrow, Song Sparrow (54 species).



Downy Young of Red-breasted Merganser, August 6, 1963.

Photo by F. W. Lahrman

Some 1963 Bird Records for the Saskatoon District

by J. B. Gollop and M. A. Gollop, Saskatoon

The following is a list of unusual observations of birds made during 1963 in the Saskatoon district. For purposes of this report, the area included is approximately a 30-mile radius of the city (Township 31 through 40, Ranges 1 through 10, West of the Third Meridian). Records were made by one or both authors, except where noted otherwise.

Nine species were recorded for the first time, at least in recent years: **Surf Scoter**, 1 on May 18 at Rice Lake on Saskatoon NHS field trip (J. F. Roy and R. V. Folker); **Broad-winged Hawk**, 1 soaring north over city on May 4 (JBG), a second report by Ross Lein, this fall; **Osprey**, 1 watched for several minutes at Pike Lake on April 27, Saskatoon NHS field trip (Roy, Folker, R. Mills); **Pileated Woodpecker**, 1 flew overhead on April 14 near Smuts (MAG); **Black-backed Three-toed Woodpecker**, 1 in evergreen, studied for at least five minutes on September 21, 3 miles southeast of city (MAG); **Common Raven**, 1 by Dr. John Gerard on December 26 at P.F.R.A. Tree Farm; **Sage Thrasher**, 1 studied for about ten minutes on June 23 near Porter Lake; **Connecticut Warbler**, 1 picked up dead at CFQC-TV tower on September 1; **Golden-crowned Sparrow**, (listed as straggler, Saskatchewan Check-list, 1959) 1 in city limits on May 18 on Saskatoon NHS field trip (Folker and Roy).

Other birds, rare in this district, were also noted: **Common Loon**, 1 dead possibly 2 weeks on August 11; **White-winged Scoter**, 1 on May 18; **Hawk Owl**, 1 on April 21 (V. Gimbel); **Hooded Merganser**, 2 on April 15; **Mockingbird**, 1 on May 18 (J. D. Hogg and J. Shadick); **Red Crossbills**, 4 on October 30 (Mrs. J. M. Pepper and Mrs. C. S. Houston) and 8 on December 26 (Folker).

Flocks larger than normally reported for this area were as follows: **Bald Eagle**, on the evening of March 31, two roosts, less than five miles apart, along the South Saskatchewan

River south of Saskatoon, 11 and 6 eagles, including one immature in each group; **Gulls**, between 7.20 and 8.30 p.m. on April 20, more than 10,000 white-headed gulls (probably Ring-billed) flew into the south part of old Rice Lake from the east to roost; on May 7, there were fewer than 2,000 gulls using the area and most of these were Franklin's Gulls; **Mourning Dove**, during the morning of August 21 flocks of 340+ and 150+ were counted in the vicinity of two dugouts, three miles apart, about 12 miles east of Swanson; **Swallows**, at least 2,000 at Pike Lake on May 12 and 18, about three-quarters were Tree Swallows, the remainder Bank and Barn, a few Cliff (on May 18); **Black-billed Magpie**, (flocks were smaller but more numerous than in 1962) between August 3 and September 15, 14 observations of flocks containing 50 or more birds were noted; **Mountain Bluebird**, 115+ on September 11, five miles south of Saskatoon.

First nesting records were recorded for the following: **Great Blue Heron**, at least four of eleven nests near Radisson were occupied on June 18, young in at least two nests were almost fully feathered (Roy); **Long-eared Owl**, nest with five eggs, found on May 20 (MAG and J. A. Slimmon); **American Redstart**, nest with five eggs on June 12 at Pike Lake (Slimmon and Roy); (**Cliff Swallow**, five miles west of the district defined above, a small colony along Eaglehill Creek found by Folker).

W. S. Richards found a partial albino female Brewer's Blackbird near Kinley. On May 20 the bird was incubating six eggs and was associating with several normally plumaged birds of the same species. She had about as much pure white on her head as there is yellow on a male Yellow-headed Blackbird. There were also two small white patches on her back. The remainder of the plumage was normal. She was tamer than the other blackbirds and several kodachromes were taken.

Unusual Recovery of Banded Black Duck

by E. Kuyt, Canadian Wildlife Service, Fort Smith, N.W.T.

Banding gives useful information about the longevity of birds. On the strength of banding records, F. H. Kortright (1942. **Ducks, geese and swans of North America**), for example, gives age records for many species of waterfowl — Trumpeter Swan 32½ years, Canada Goose 33 years, Mallard 20 years, Black Duck seven and 10 years, Blue-winged Teal four years, etc.

On June 9, 1963 we collected a Black Duck (*Anas rubripes*) at Lock-out Point, Thelon River, N.W.T. This bird, one of a pair, carried band No. 577-39092. The band had become badly worn and it cracked on being flattened out prior to submission to

the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. It turned out that the duck was banded on August 31, 1955, as an immature male in Newport, Vermont, by that state's Fish and Game Department. The bird had thus almost completed its eighth year. Small wonder that the band was badly worn!

Black Ducks are not common in the Thelon area. We see only the occasional pair or small flock of three or four birds. We have not found any nests or young of the Black Duck there in four summers. Perhaps these ducks only come there to moult as do the Canada Geese in the Thelon River area.

Banding Recovery of Great Gray Owl

by A. F. Oeming, Alberta Game Farm, Edmonton

A recent banding return from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service informed me that a Great Gray Owl (*Strix nebulosa*) banded (No. 498-56703) by me as a four-week-old juvenile on May 30, 1954 had been recovered 70 miles to the north near Drayton Valley in September, 1963, by R. Hamilton, Thorsby, Alberta. The bird was one of two banded at a nest site some 50 miles west of Rocky Mountain House, Alberta, during an intensive preliminary Great Gray Owl life history study.

In February, 1963, I recovered a female Snowy Owl (*Nyctea nyctea*)

previously banded, March, 1954, in the same area, Andrew, Alberta. In fact this bird was less than two miles from the original banding site and her weight (5 lbs. 9 ozs.) had dropped only one ounce. The plumage was faded, but the bird was as physically vigorous as I recall her being in 1954.

These returns indicate that life spans of northern owls may be surprisingly long and that the Great Gray Owl may never wander far from its birth region and that Snowy Owls (*Can. Field Nat.* 72: 171-172, 1958) inexplicably return to the same wintering grounds.



Juvenile Great Gray Owl.

Photo by A. F. Oeming

Observations of Some Unusual Birds at Lake Kipabiskau

by James A. Slimmon, Saskatoon

During a 12-day stay this past summer (1963) at Lake Kipabiskau, southeast of Melfort, some interesting observations were made on the southwest shore where our cottage is located. These may be of interest to others inasmuch as the species concerned are recorded as rare or uncommon summer residents at Nipawin (C. Stuart Houston and Maurice G. Street, 1959. *The Birds of the Saskatchewan River, Carlton to Cumberland*. Spec. Publ. No. 2, Sask. Nat. Hist. Soc., Regina).

Broad-winged Hawk: A pair was noted on July 12, and a nest was located about 20 yards from the shore and about two-thirds of the way up in an old poplar tree. From the newly-developed cottage service road, which was almost on the same level as the nest, three downy, well-developed young could be seen. They were large enough to be able to feed themselves, and were seen pulling off food in the nest. These young all vanished during the night of July 17.

No marks were on the tree and no twigs were broken on the tree trunk; the only evidence was the finding of a few pin feathers on the ground. The adults flew around for the rest of that day, at times whistling excitedly.

Whip-poor-will: It had been reported to me during the summer of 1962 that its call had been heard on several occasions. During our stay, one was heard just a few times late in the evening of July 15. One was heard (and only seen briefly in the dusk) many times during the late evening of July 18. Both evenings the call originated from the same spot near the clearing. The last time the call rose above the trees as the bird flew back and forth down the shore.

Yellow-bellied Flycatcher: One was seen on July 16. Two were observed closely for some time on July 18.

Swainson's Thrush: Many were seen and heard during our stay. A nest was found about 18 inches above the ground, containing two young, on July 16. The young flew on July 19.

Watch for Eastern Bluebirds

Soon after you receive this **Blue Jay**, the first Mountain Bluebirds will be returning to the prairies. Throughout the spring migration, watch for Eastern Bluebirds as well. There is the possibility that we may see more of them in the 1964 migration. In Manitoba, where the Eastern Bluebird is a regular summer resident, the Brandon Junior Birders' nest box project for 1963 revealed a "significant increase in the Eastern Bluebird population" (**Blue Jay**, 21:150), and reports of bluebirds of this species seen in Saskatchewan last fall suggest that there may also have been an increase in the numbers in this province, where the Eastern species is no longer commonly seen. **Mrs. John Hubbard** of Grenfell, Saskatchewan, reported seeing six on the Hubbard farm on October 14, 1963, the first she had seen since May, 1953. On September 29, 1963, **Mr. and Mrs. Ronald Hooper** had a good look at an Eastern Bluebird on Gordon's Indian

Reserve about eight miles south of Punnichy. There were many flocks of Mountain Bluebirds at the time, but the Eastern Bluebird did not appear to be with any of them. The only other time Ronald Hooper has seen Eastern Bluebirds was on September 25, 1962 when he saw a flock of about a dozen on a farm six miles north of Avonhurst, northeast of Regina.

Fall migration dates for, 1963 for Manitoba, as established by records submitted to Harold Hosford for Newsletter No. 6 of the Natural History Society of Manitoba, provide an interesting frame of reference for the Saskatchewan records: "First movement of this species through Winnipeg about Sept. 25/29 with 8 observed on the 29th. Three were noted at Baldur on Sept. 27. In early October, 5 were at La Broquerie on the 1st, 22 at Pine Falls on the 6th and 7 at Margaret on the 9th. Last seen at Winnipeg on October 26 (2)."

Downstream Movement of Moulting Whistling Swans, Thelon River, N.W.T.

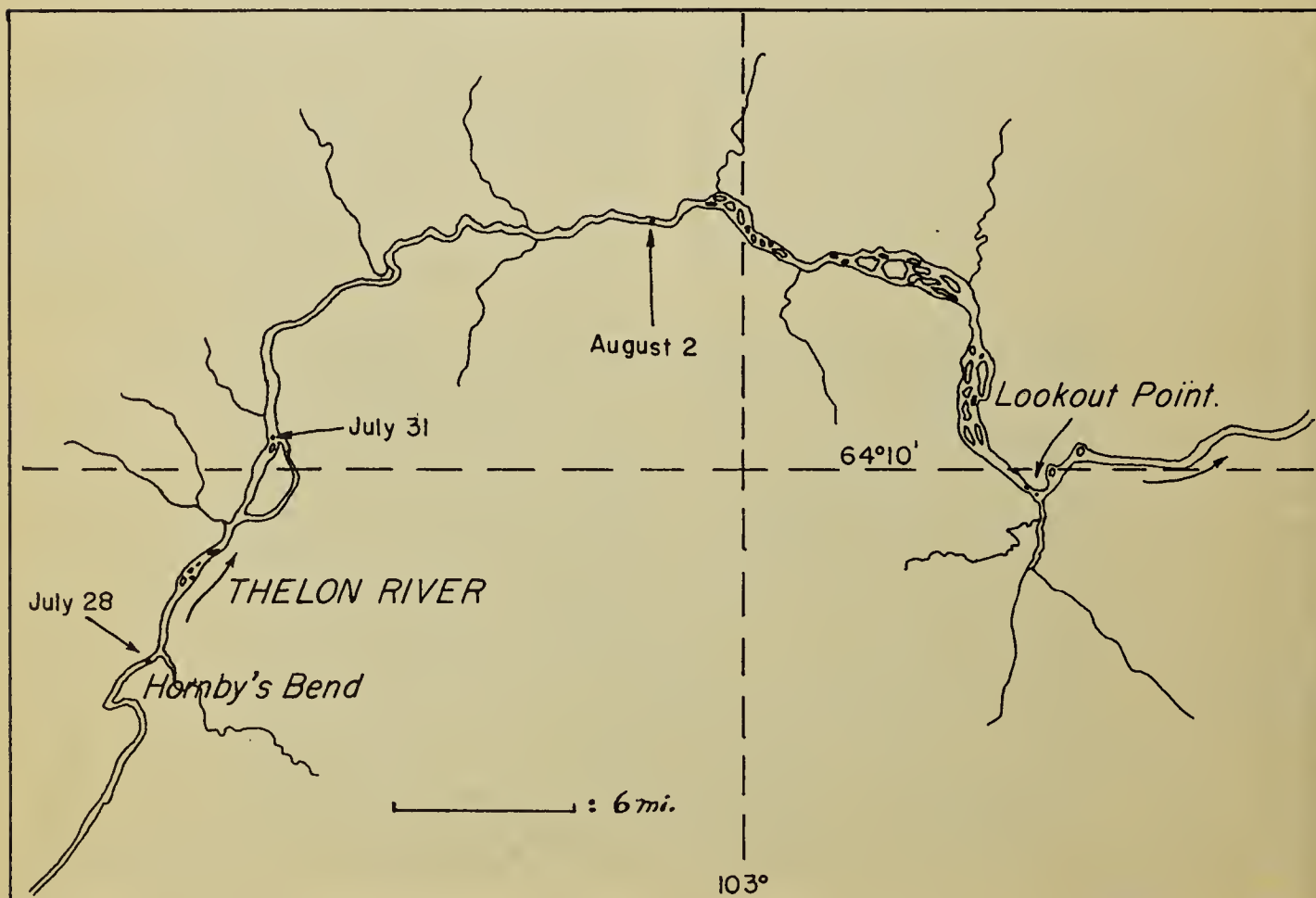
by E. Kuyt, Canadian Wildlife Service, Fort Smith, N.W.T.

Whistling Swans are the most impressive of our waterfowl. Some of my most treasured observations are those made during early spring when a company of swans serenely glides to a resting spot on the first run-off water on the river ice in the tundra.

During my summer field work in 1963 in the Thelon Game Sanctuary the opportunity arose to band a number of moulting Whistling Swans (*Olor columbianus*). On a canoe trip on the Thelon River to the Hornby's Bend area, about 75 miles upstream from our camp at Lookout Point (see map), we encountered about 20 swans, including some cygnets. On July 28 and 31, 1963, we were able to band 17 adult swans. We found these swans rather easy to capture. Our method was to chase the moulting birds downwind and then, with the swans only diving when we were very close to them, the man in the bow of the canoe could, with some practice, often secure the bird on the first run by reaching over the gun-whale with one hand. We preferred



Photo by E. Kuyt
Elsie Kuyt holding a 15½ lb. Whistling Swan,
July 18, 1963.



the downwind run as the swans could then not get any lift from their ragged wings. As soon after capture as possible, the moulting swans were weighed, sexed, banded, and released. On a few occasions the swans, like moulting geese, swam ashore and attempted to hide in the vegetation along the river bank. Our Labrador retriever was usually master of this situation but once or twice the swans ran so far back from the river through an almost impenetrable willow growth that we did not want to prolong the pursuit.

On July 31 during our return trip to Lookout Point we recaptured swan No. 509-02182, an 11½ lb. female banded on July 28 near Hornby's Bend (just below the site where Hornby and his two companions starved to death in the early part of 1927). Two other birds not previously banded were taken at the same time and we believe that these may have been the birds that escaped into the willow thickets during an earlier encounter. The swans had travelled about 12 miles downstream since July 28. The current in that section of the river is about 3 to 3½ miles per hour (J. W. Tyrrell. 1902. Explor-

atory Survey of Divide between Great Slave Lake and Hudson Bay. Ann. Rept. Dept. Int., Ottawa). On August 2 the same swan was taken again, this time about 25 miles downstream from the July 31 site. Three other banded swans accompanied No. 509-02182. As we had "overnighted" a few miles upstream, the swans must have drifted past our camp during the night.

In the course of making many flights by plane and a few canoe trips I have otherwise never seen swans on the river between the July 31 recovery site and the island complex east of the August 2 site. This section of the river cuts deeply into a sandstone formation and in contrast to most other parts of the river there are no sedge flats, grassy riverbanks, quiet backwaters, or shallow lagoons, habitats preferred by swans.

A possible explanation for the downstream movement of the swans is that we disturbed them from their feeding area near Hornby's Bend and unintentionally drove them past the July 31 site into unsuitable habitat. The flightless swans then swam downstream with the current several miles searching for a more suitable environment.



Lookout Point, Thelon River, N.W.T., June, 1961

Photo by Robert R. Taylor

Regina Waterfowl Park Nesting Survey 1962

by Richard M. Sanderson, Regina

In June, 1962, Mr. Fred Bard, Director of the Saskatchewan Museum of Natural History, engaged Bill Fleming and myself to carry out a survey of breeding birds in the marsh habitat of the Regina Waterfowl Park, working from "Tern Island" (see map) east along the Wascana Creek to approximately a mile beyond the Highway No. 1 by-pass. The object of our survey was to record the number and location of breeding species of birds as a record of what species the Waterfowl Park now affords protection to during the nesting season. This survey came about as a result of the Wascana Development Plan. The changes that will take place in the marsh habitat owing to the plan for development will undoubtedly force some species to vacate the area. Thus, some birds that commonly breed here now may in the future become rare as breeding species. Hence the importance of obtaining a record of what we have presently nesting here.

The success of a nesting season depends mainly on weather conditions.

With the aid of the monthly meteorological bulletin published by the Department of Transport, Regina Airport, the following summary of weather conditions during the nesting season (May-July) was prepared. The May weather was cool during the first half of the month and a little above the normal temperature during the latter half. The average temperature was 50.1° while the normal is 52.2° . The total precipitation was 1.68 inches, .09 inches above normal. Regina's June weather was mainly wet and cool during the first half and sunny and warm during the last half. The average temperature was 63.2° compared to a normal of 59.5° . Total precipitation was 3.82 inches, .54 inches above normal. On June 27 a new all-time high wind speed of 95 m.p.h. in gusts was registered. Regina had its coolest July in 10 years with the temperature averaging 63.1° compared to a normal of 66.7° . The total precipitation was .15 inches below normal. Weather was responsible for little damage in the marsh except that some Yellow-headed

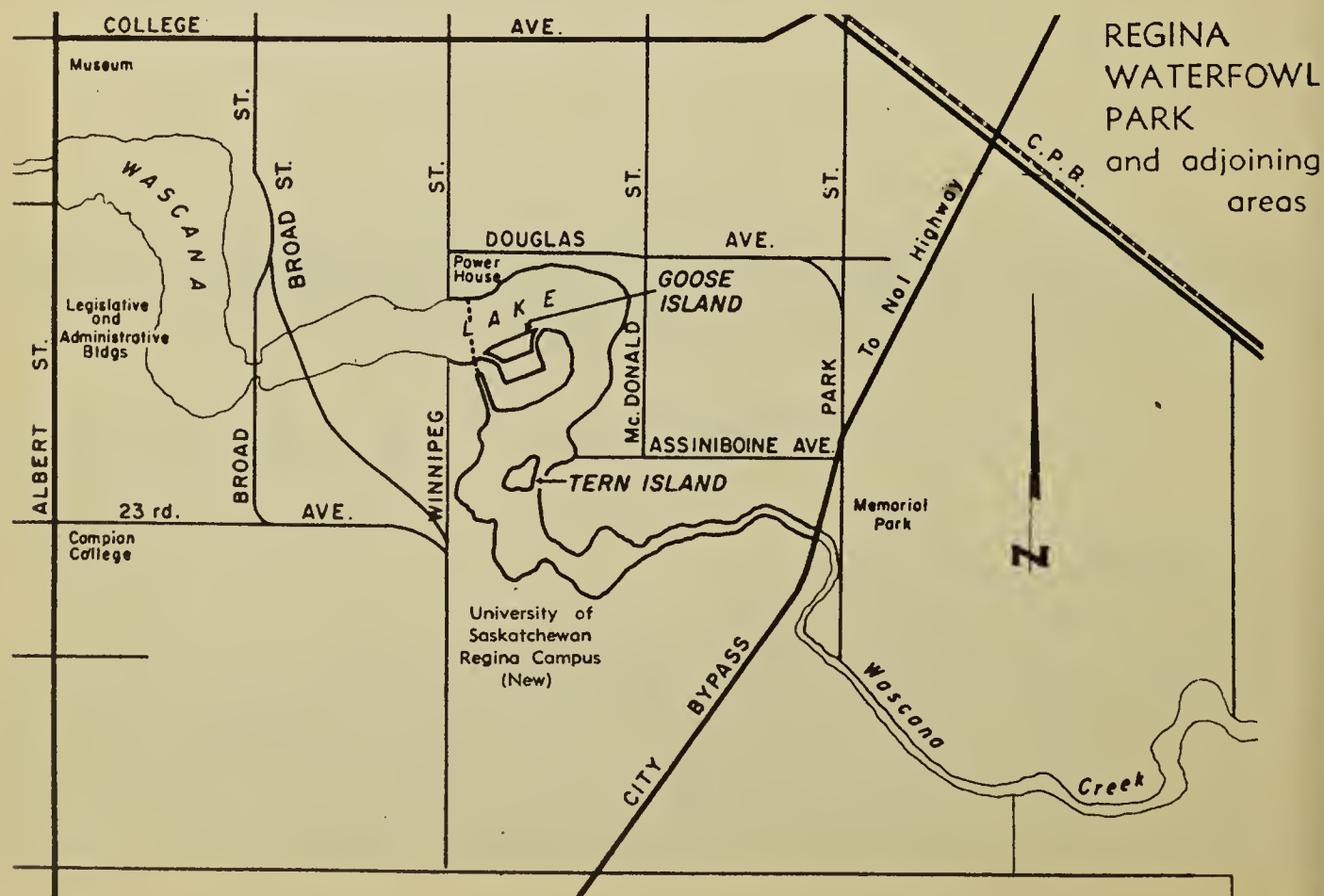




Photo by Fred W. Lahrman, SMNH

Breeding colony of Common Terns at Tern Island, 1962

Blackbirds' nests were destroyed by the 95 m.p.h. gusts of wind. The water level up to June 23 was well above the previous year's high, the spring run-off having filled the creek. No waterfowl nests seemed to be in danger of being left high and dry before the young left, and there was ample water for all species.

The deepest water for divers was to be found in the part of the creek extending from the by-pass approximately a mile east. Here, where the creek's natural channel is 8 to 9 feet deep and where it is bordered by cattails and bulrushes, most of the nests were found. Large colonies of Yellow-headed Blackbirds made good use of the bulrushes, as did Canvasbacks, Redheads, Black Terns, and numerous cots.

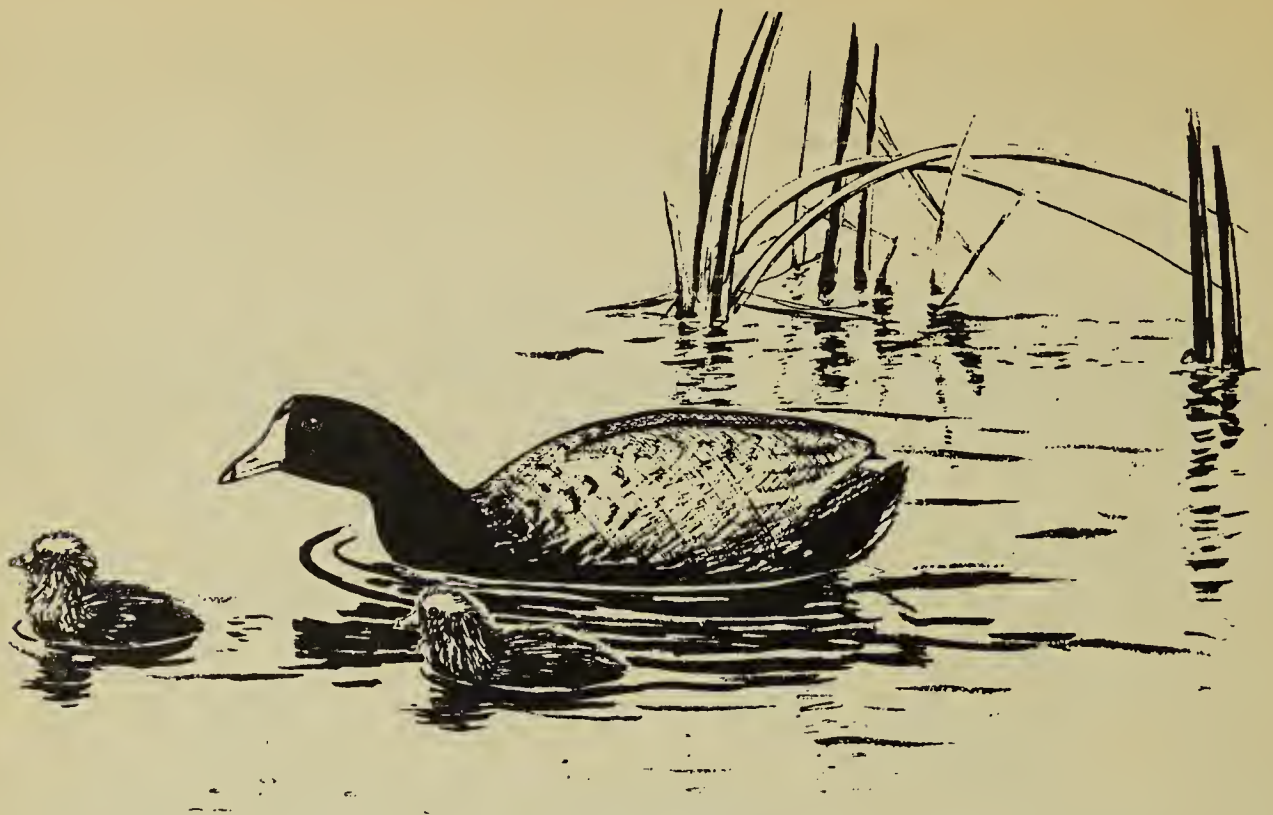
Owing to this year's higher water level there was a lack of mudflats and consequently a noticeable decrease in the number of nesting Willets and American Avocets. "Tern Island", much favoured by Willets, Killdeer and Avocets, was under 8-10 inches of water this year.

The number of Red-winged Blackbirds found nesting was down compared with last year, possibly due to the lack of suitable habitat. Some

were found nesting a scant two or three inches above water in dead weeds.

An area that should be given special notice is a large growth of bulrushes and cattails lying just east of the by-pass on the south side of the creek. Here we found six species of birds living in very close proximity. Canvasbacks, Redheads, Black Terns, American Coots, Pied-billed Grebes and Yellow-headed Blackbirds were crowded together in one amazing mass. No doubt they could only co-exist because of their varied feeding habits.

It should be mentioned that the following brief annotated list of species includes mainly those species nesting on or above the water, and is not a complete account of all nesting species. For example, we noted on two occasions, two pairs of Yellowthroats and heard them singing several times although we could not find a nest on subsequent searches. Owing to our lack of time (we were out on five different days between June 15 and June 23 and spent 45 hours in the field), we concerned ourselves mainly with those nests accessible by rowboat and hip waders. A few nests were found back from the shore.



Sketch by Fred W. Lahrman

Coot with young. Reprinted from BIRDS OF REGINA

ANNOTATED LIST OF SPECIES:

EARED GREBE. *Podiceps caspicus*. Only one nest was found along the creek, June 18, containing five eggs. A large colony, however, was located in the Waterfowl Park below the area of our survey, studied by Fred W. Lahrman (*Blue Jay*, 20:158).

PIED-BILLED GREBE. *Podilymbus podiceps*. Common. Total of 14 nests found, one of which contained eight eggs. A nest on Tern Island contained one egg and four young, while another along the creek had three young.

CANADA GOOSE. *Branta canadensis*. Several vacant nests were found out along the creek, plus five eggs floating near the southeast corner of Tern Island. By this time of the year, of course, the geese had brought off their families.

MALLARD. *Anas platyrhynchos*. One nest was found while dragging a field with a rope. Another was found on a goose nest platform on Tern Island.

REDHEAD. *Aythya americana*; and **CANVASBACK.** *Aythya valisineria*. Common. Total of 14 nests found. This seemed to be a bonus year for these birds, and it is the most I have ever seen here during the nesting season. It was not uncommon to see five or six pairs of Canvasback feeding early in the morning, although the Redheads were not quite so numerous. As we discovered most of the

nests while working the bulrushes we did not see the adults leave the nests, and because of the similarity of the eggs of the Redhead and the Canvasback we were forced to leave some nests unidentified. We did collect down from some of the nests which we hope can be identified. One of the nests contained 22 eggs.

RUDDY DUCK. *Oxyura jamaicensis*. Scarce. One nest was found on Tern Island containing one egg, on June 23. Though several pair were seen along the creek, June 15 and June 18, no nests were found.

AMERICAN COOT. *Fulica americana*. Very common. Total of 117 nests found, 16 of these being on Tern Island. By June 23 hatching was fairly well advanced. Towards noon each day we would often find nests with two young just hatched and the oldest we saw was three to four days old. The largest number of eggs found in one nest was 12, and the largest number of young seen with an adult was six. On June 18 Fleming found four young decapitated beside a nest and nearby three dead young lay by a nest.

KILLDEER. *Charadrius vociferus*. Common. Three nests found in grassy field during a stop for lunch. Adults always seen, though we did not make much effort to locate their nests.

COMMON TERN. *Sterna hirundo*. 12 nests were found crowded together on a mound of gravel within an area

of less than nine square feet. Less than a square foot for a nest and a bird. One chick hatched by June 23. This amazing struggle for existence is quite typical of the entire waterfowl park and its related wildlife.

BLACK TERN. *Chidonias niger*. Very common. Total of 45 nests found, two of these on Tern Island. Nests were found mainly in small colonies, one of which contained 14 nests. Some nests were ready, but not laid in, by June 18. Many birds were nesting on floating debris such as boards, etc.

YELLOW-HEADED BLACKBIRD. *Xanthocephalus xanthocephalus*. Very common. Total of 120 nests. Nesting in colonies everywhere. By June 23, the young from six to seven nests had already flown, and many nests had two or three young. Two nests were found built one above the other on the same bulrush stalk, each containing two eggs. On the 18th many nests were still under construction, mainly in the "wet stage".

RED-WINGED BLACKBIRD. *Agelaius phoeniceus*. Common, but not as common as in 1961. Total of 32 nests found. Two colonies, one with 10 nests and the other with 12. Both colonies were built low to the water in dead weeds. By June 20, seven nests had young.

BROWN-HEADED COWBIRD. *Molothrus ater*. Two Red-winged Blackbirds' nests contained one cowbird egg each. Both were removed.

[Editor's Note: In spite of the accessibility and central location of the Regina Waterfowl Park its plant and animal life have had very little intensive study by naturalists. Many opportunities are being missed—Dr. Al Hochbaum of the Delta Waterfowl Research Station, has pointed out that the large wintering population of Mallards provides a quite unique opportunity for the study of Mallard behaviour. The only bird behaviour studies we know of that have been carried on at the Waterfowl Park have been studies made by Dr. Robert W. Nero of the Yellow-headed and Red-winged Blackbirds. Over the years, there have been only occasional waterfowl counts, banding projects, and casual recording of breedings birds. Margaret Belcher's **Birds of Regina** (1961), which reviews over 50 years of Regina records, gives only the most general

indications of the breeding status of species at the Wascana Marsh. Hence the worth of this unpretentious study undertaken by Sanderson and Fleming. Though they spent a quite inadequate period of time at the Marsh—a total of only 45 hours—they were able to establish important facts such as the abundance of the coot (117 nests found), a common species on which Belcher could only collect the following information: "Several nests were found each year from 1950 to 1953, with six nests in 1950, and broods of coots seemed especially numerous on the marsh in 1960. From 1957 to 1959 coots with young were reported only once, on July 7, 1957 (Belcher)." More and serious studies should be undertaken in this natural marsh which is being incorporated into Regina's "Wascana Centre". The appeal of the area to all city residents and visitors interested in wildlife is described in a little 19-page bulletin recently published by the Saskatchewan Museum of Natural History, "Wascana Bird Sanctuary" (Popular Series No. 6) available from the Museum for 10 cents.

EARED GREBE COLONY AT REGINA, 1963

by **Fred W. Lahrman**, Saskatchewan Museum of Natural History, Regina

For two years we have reported large colonies of the Eared Grebe at the Regina Waterfowl Park (**Blue Jay**, 19:170-171; 20:157). During the summer of 1961 48 nests were under observation at the marsh where no grebes had nested since the early 1950's. In 1962 this number grew to 165 nests, an impressive increase. It is of interest that a slightly larger number of nests appeared in 1963. On May 12 the grebes were already nesting (1963 first arrival date for the Regina area—April 28), one colony starting up at the city power house, and one at the Broad Street Bridge. On June 8, 100 nests were counted on the east side of the park below "Faraway House", on June 16, 29 were counted at the Broad Street Bridge, and Walter Sweet reported 50 at the power house, a total of 179.

These colonies were in approximately the same location as last year, except that there were no nests south of "Goose Island" where there had been a small colony of 14 in 1962.

Twenty-second Annual Saskatchewan Christmas Bird Count, 1963

Edited by **Mary Houston**, Saskatoon

This year only 23 Saskatchewan localities reported Christmas Bird Counts—the lowest number since 1957. Fifty species of birds were seen on count day—again the lowest number since 1957.

Two new species bring the total list of birds seen in 22 years of Christmas bird counts in Saskatchewan to 110. A Rufous-sided Towhee was seen at Moose Jaw. From Lady Lake, Donald Buckle reported what he believes was a Gyrfalcon—a large, light greyish white bird, near the size of a Snowy or Great Horned Owl with a small hawk-like head, and a long tail lightly barred on its underside. He flushed this bird three times from a spruce grove bordering the Lilian River, and was within 50 feet of it when it was in flight.

There were no marked trends in species numbers except for Redpolls which were reported from 19 of the 23 localities compared to 13 of 26 localities in 1962. Other species most frequently seen were recorded in the following numbers of localities: House Sparrow, 22; Black-billed Magpie, 21; Black-capped Chickadee, 16; Snow Bunting, 13; Bohemian Waxwing, 12; Gray Partridge, 12; Downy Woodpecker, 11; Rock Dove, 11; Pine Grosbeak, 10; Great Horned Owl, 10; Sharp-tailed Grouse, 9.

BANGOR, Sask. Dec. 27; 30 miles by car and around yard; a few degrees below zero; sunny. 6 species, 559 individuals. Boreal Owl, 1; Black-billed Magpie, 2; Black-capped Chickadee, 4; House Sparrow, 53; Common Redpoll, 50; Snow Bunting, 449. (Add: Sharp-tailed Grouse, 3, Dec. 24; Great Horned Owl, 1, Dec. 24; Downy Woodpecker, 1, Dec. 24; Pine Grosbeak, 15, Dec. 24).—**Mrs. A. Thompson.**

BATTLEFORD, Sask. Dec. 31; 39 miles by car and 6 miles on foot in 5½ hours; temp 39°; wind N.W. at 8 m.p.h.; 4 inches of snow. 16 species, 357 individuals. Ruffed Grouse, 5; Sharp-tailed Grouse, 91; Gray Partridge, 1; Rock Dove, 3; Great Horned Owl, 3; Hairy Woodpecker, 1; Blue

Jay, 1; Black-billed Magpie, 32; Black-capped Chickadee, 14; Bohemian Waxwing, 7; Northern Shrike, 1; House Sparrow, 53; Evening Grosbeak, 19; Pine Grosbeak, 9; Common Redpoll, 44; Snow Bunting, 73.—**Spencer G. Sealy.**

BLADWORTH, Sask. Dec. 27; 4 hours afield by truck and on foot, then around the yard the rest of the day; temp. -6° to 2°; almost calm; variable cloudiness. 9 species, 174 individuals. Sharp-tailed Grouse, 4; Gray Partridge, 23; Rock Dove, 3; Great Horned Owl, 1; Downy Woodpecker, 1; Black-billed Magpie, 11; Black-capped Chickadee, 1; House Sparrow, 60; Common Redpoll, 70. (Add: Golden Eagle, 1, Dec. 22; Horned Lark, 3, Dec. 22; Bohemian Waxwing, 3, Dec. 20, 23; Rusty Blackbird, 1, Dec. 22, 23; Evening Grosbeak, 1, Dec. 21, 30).—**Lawrence Beckie.**

BUFFALO POUND LAKE, Sask. Dec. 27; 14 party hours, 13½ on foot and ½ by car, and 20½ miles by foot and 18 by car; temp 10° to 19°; wind N.W. 15 m.p.h.; clear; 3 inches of snow on the level; prairie, hills, wooded draws. 10 species, 222 individuals. Sharp-tailed Grouse, 25; Great Horned Owl, 1; Short-eared Owl, 2; Hairy Woodpecker, 1; Downy Woodpecker, 2; Black-billed Magpie, 19; Common Crow, 1; Pine Grosbeak, 5; Common Redpoll, 137; Snow Bunting, 29.—**Mr. Carl Ellis, John Ellis, John Horton and Michael Rhodes** (compilers).

DILKE, Sask. Dec. 22; 34 miles in 3 hours by car, 3 miles on foot and 3 hours about farmyard; temp 0° to 10°; wind light rising to gusts of 35 m.p.h. by afternoon; snow cover 2 inches. 6 species, 400 individuals. Sharp-tailed Grouse, 19; Horned Lark, 1; Black-billed Magpie, 28; House Sparrow, 81; Rusty Blackbird, 1; Common Redpoll, 270. (Add: Goshawk, 1, Dec. 23; Golden Eagle, 1, Dec. 25; Gray Partridge, 7, Dec. 31; Great Horned Owl, 1, Dec. 28; Snowy Owl, 1, Dec. 28, 30, 31; Black-capped Chickadee, 1-2, Dec. 20, 21, 23, 25, 31; Bohemian Waxwing 2, Dec. 27;

Northern Shrike, 1, Dec. 23, 25, 27, 29).—**Boswell Belcher** (compiler), **Margaret Belcher, Mr. and Mrs. S. R. Belcher.**

ESTEVAN, Sask. Dec. 27; 6 miles by foot and 110 miles by car in 8 hours; temp 5°, rising to 15°; wind calm, rising to N.W. 20 m.p.h. at noon; 4 inches of snow. 20 species, 909 individuals. Mallard, 130; Lesser Scaup, 1; Sharp-tailed Grouse, 15; Gray Partridge, 12; Rock Dove, 4; Great Horned Owl, 1; Short-eared Owl, 1; Downy Woodpecker, 1; Horned Lark, 144; Black-billed Magpie, 5; Black-capped Chickadee, 5; Bohemian Waxwing, 33; Starling, 11; House Sparrow, 300; Red-winged Blackbird, 10; Rusty Blackbird, 10; Pine Grosbeak, 17; Common Redpoll, 100; Tree Sparrow, 4; Snow Bunting, 105. (Add: Golden Eagle, 1, Dec. 23; Prairie Falcon, 1, Dec. 23).—**Darrel Carlson, M. Ross Lein** (compiler).

ETHELTON, Sask. Dec. 26; 15 miles by car and 3 miles on foot in 3 hours; temp. 0°; wind light; light snow falling; 12 inches of snow on ground. 6 species, 178 individuals. Gray Partridge, 7; Hairy Woodpecker, 1; Downy Woodpecker, 1; Black-billed Magpie, 7; Black-capped Chickadee, 6; House Sparrow, 156. (Add: Snow Bunting, 300, Dec. 25.)—**Genevieve Belliveau** (compiler), **Mrs. George Clarke.**

FORT QU'APPELLE, Sask. Dec. 21; temp. 5°; 2 inches of snow. 14 species, 414 individuals. Mallard, 1; Rough-legged Hawk, 1; Ruffed Grouse, 1; Sharp-tailed Grouse, 3; Downy Woodpecker, 2; Blue Jay, 1; Black-billed Magpie, 5; Black-capped Chickadee, 5; Bohemian Waxwing, 36; Northern Shrike, 1; House Sparrow, 41; Rusty Blackbird, 1; Pine Grosbeak, 1; Common Redpoll, 315. (Add: Goshawk, 1, Dec. 24, 29; Golden Eagle, 2, Dec. 24, 25; Gray Partridge, 11, Dec. 25; Rock Dove, 11, Dec. 26; Great Horned Owl, 1, Dec. 26, 28; Snowy Owl, 1, Dec. 20; Hairy Woodpecker; White-breasted Nuthatch, 1, Dec. 23; Red-winged Blackbird, 1, Dec. 23, and 4, Dec. 29; Slate-colored Junco, 1; Oregon Junco, 1, Jan. 1; Snow Bunting, 35, Dec. 22).—**Dr. and Mrs. G. D. Barnett, Alden Barnett, E. Manley Callin** (compiler), **Richard Carter, Mr. and Mrs. Errol Cochrane, Mr. and Mrs. William Gray, Richard Nevard, Horace Reed, S. Regan, Mr. and Mrs. Rumancik.**

GRENFELL, Sask. Dec. 24; 1 hour and 1 mile on foot, and around farm all day; temp. 38°; calm; overcast; summerfallow bare, 3-4 inches snow in stubble; parkland. 7 species, 188 individuals. Black-billed Magpie, 5; Black-capped Chickadee, 2; Bohemian Waxwing, 19; House Sparrow, 100; Common Redpoll, 60; Slate-colored Junco, 2 (1 very rusty brown but with no distinct head marking); (Add: Sharp-tailed Grouse, 32, Dec. 29; Gray Partridge, 8, Dec. 28; Great Horned Owl, 1, Dec. 27; Hairy Woodpecker, 1, Dec. 29; Northern Shrike, 1, Dec. 28; Pine Grosbeak, 4, Dec. 28).—**Mr. and Mrs. John Hubbard.**

HAWARDEN, Sask. Dec. 24; 50 miles by car, and around the farmyard on foot; 6½ hours; temp. 35°; 3 to 4 inches of snow; calm. 9 species, 461 individuals. Gray Partridge, 12; Rock Dove, 17; Snowy Owl, 1; Black-billed Magpie, 9; Black-capped Chickadee, 1; Bohemian Waxwing, 1; House Sparrow, 200; Common Redpoll, 20; Snow Bunting, 200. (Add: Sharp-tailed Grouse, 2, Dec. 27, and 7, Dec. 31; Great Horned Owl, 1, Dec. 29; Short-eared Owl, 1, Dec. 27.)—**Harold Kvinge.**

KINDERSLEY, Sask. Dec. 26; 18 miles by car, 2 miles on foot; temp. 5°; wind 5 m.p.h.; sunny. 7 species, 541 individuals. Gray Partridge, 100; Rock Dove, 2; Great Horned Owl, 1; Bohemian Waxwing, 46; Starling, 2; House Sparrow, 190; Snow Bunting, 200. (Add: Golden Eagle, 1, Dec. 28; Snowy Owl, 1, Dec. 28; Common Redpoll, 4, Dec. 31).—**Glen A. Fox** (compiler), **Ron and Kim Lamont.**

LADY LAKE, Sask. Jan. 1; 16 miles in 1 hour by car, 1 hour on foot; temp. 30°; clear and calm; 8 inches of snow. 9 species, 39 individuals. Gyrfalcon, 1 (see introduction—Ed.); Gray Jay, 2; Black-billed Magpie, 2; Common Raven, 1; Black-capped Chickadee, 5; Boreal Chickadee, 2; House Sparrow, 3; Pine Grosbeak, 3; Snow Bunting, 20. (Add: Great Horned Owl, 1, Dec. 23; Bohemian Waxwing, 3, Dec. 30).—**Donald J. Buckle.**

LLOYDMINSTER, Sask. Dec. 29; 40 miles by car and on foot in 3 hours; temp. 21°; wind S.W. 4 m.p.h.; partly cloudy. 12 species, 166 individuals. Ruffed Grouse, 1; Great Horned Owl, 1; Blue Jay, 6; Black-billed Magpie, 13; Black-capped Chickadee, 12; Bohemian Waxwing, 11; Starling, 4;

House Sparrow, 48; Evening Grosbeak, 7; Common Redpoll, 35; Red Crossbill, 4; Snow Bunting, 24.)—**Russ Robertson.**

MASEFIELD, Sask. Dec. 24; 35 miles by car and 3 miles on foot along the river; temp. 35°; calm; sunny, misting later; no snow on the level. 10 species, 383 individuals. Ring-necked Pheasant, 5; Gray Partridge, 4; Horned Lark, 10; Black-billed Magpie, 10; Black-capped Chickadee, 1; Bohemian Waxwing, 10; House Sparrow, 300; Rusty Blackbird, 12; Common Redpoll, 25; Tree Sparrow, 6. (Add: Golden Eagle, Dec. 23; Pigeon Hawk, Dec. 25; Snowy Owl, Dec. 25; Long-eared Owl, Dec. 21; Northern Shrike, Dec. 29; Snow Bunting, Dec. 21.)—**J. David Chandler.**

MOOSE JAW, Sask. Dec. 26; 12 party miles in 9 hours on foot, and 19 party miles in 12 party hours by car; temp. 10° to 12°; wind gusting to 30 m.p.h.; cloudy, clearing later; 4 inches of snow; town, river valley, prairie. 13 species, 456 individuals. Ring-necked Pheasant, 18; Rock Dove, 16; Downy Woodpecker, 1; Black-billed Magpie, 22; Black-capped Chickadee, 8; Bohemian Waxwing, 12; Starling, 1; House Sparrow, 300; Red-winged Blackbird, 1; Common Redpoll, 27; Rufous-sided Towhee, 1; Slate-colored Junco, 3; Snow Bunting, 46. (Add: Brewer's Blackbird, 1, Dec. 29; Pine Grosbeak, 9, Dec. 29, and 4, Dec. 30; Oregon Junco, 1, Dec. 23.)—**J. Horton and M. Rhodes** (compilers), **John Ellis, Mrs. Vesta Humphreys, Mr. and Mrs. C. Knight, Mr. and Mrs. J. Nelson, Mrs. A. Rankin, Mrs. Dorothy Rhodes, Mrs. C. V. Stokins, Mrs. F. B. Taylor, Mrs. C. West.**

REGINA, Sask. Dec. 28; party hours 108½ (43 on foot, 65½ by car); party miles 313½ (30½ on foot, 283 by car); temp. -12° to 6°; calm and clear. 29 species, 6823 individuals. Mute Swan, 11; Whistling Swan, 3; Canada Goose, 390; Mallard, 990; American Widgeon, 7; Lesser Scaup, 2; Common Goldeneye, 2; Ruddy Duck, 3; Pigeon Hawk, 1; Ring-necked Pheasant, 7; Gray Partridge, 30; American Coot, 11; Rock Dove, 156; Great Horned Owl, 4; Snowy Owl, 5; Short-eared Owl, 7; Downy Woodpecker, 7; Horned Lark, 2; Black-billed Magpie, 113; Black-capped Chickadee, 29; Boreal Chick-

adee, 3; Bohemian Waxwing, 153; Northern Shrike, 3; Starling, 8; House Sparrow, 2550; Rusty Blackbird, 1; Pine Grosbeak, 83; Common Redpoll, 462; Snow Bunting, 1780. (Add: Gadwall, 2, Dec. 24; Pintail, 1, Dec. 24; Blue-winged Teal, 1, Dec. 24; Canvasback, 1, Dec. 24; Prairie Falcon, 1, Dec. 30; Yellow-shafted Flicker, 1, Dec. 26; Hairy Woodpecker, 1, Dec. 29 and Jan. 1; White-breasted Nuthatch, 1, Jan. 1; Robin, 1, Dec. 26; Hoary Redpoll, 3, Jan. 1; White-winged Crossbill, 8, Dec. 29; Slate-colored Junco, 3, Dec. 19.)—**Ron Austin, Mrs. A. J. Bailey, Margaret Belcher, Mr. and Mrs. Al Binnie, Frank Brazier, Betty Cruickshank, Elmer Fox, Reg Fox, Doug Gilroy, Sharon Haggerty, George and Marjorie Ledingham, Mr. and Mrs. Fortescue McKay, Sally Moss, Robert Nero, Carla Stein, Ruth and Herb Tempel, Margaret Tempel, Dot and Doug Wade** (compilers), **Holly Wallace, Vic Wilshire.**

SASKATOON, Sask. Dec. 26; party hours 44 (20½ on foot and 23½ by car); party miles 283 (34 on foot and 249 by car); temp. 4° to 6°; wind N.W. 15 m.p.h.; partly cloudy; 4 inches of snow. 28 species, 6217 individuals. Mallard, 7; Common Goldeneye, 5; Pigeon Hawk, 2; Sharp-tailed Grouse, 106; Ring-necked Pheasant, 22; Gray Partridge, 127; Rock Dove, 276; Great Horned Owl, 5; Snowy Owl, 4; Short-eared Owl, 1; Yellow-shafted Flicker, 1; Hairy Woodpecker, 1; Downy Woodpecker, 5; Blue Jay, 2; Black-billed Magpie, 137; Common Raven, 1; Black-capped Chickadee, 49; Red-breasted Nuthatch, 1; Bohemian Waxwing, 444; Northern Shrike, 6; Starling, 4; House Sparrow, 2467; Evening Grosbeak, 10; Pine Grosbeak, 61; Hoary Redpoll, 13; Common Redpoll, 1676; Red Crossbill, 8; Snow Bunting, 781.—**Harold Belcher, W. J. Brucks, Malcolm Campbell, Pern Cordery, Bob Folker, Dr. and Mrs. John Gerrard, Chris, Peter and Jonathan Gerrard, Mr. and Mrs. J. B. Gollop, Michael Gollop, Mr. and Mrs. Jim Hogg, Dr. C. J. Houston, Dr. and Mrs. Stuart Houston, Stan Houston, Murray Martin, Jean McKenzie, Greg Michalenko, Mrs. Jane Miller, Jim Miller, Bob Mills, John Shadick, Stanley Shadick, Russ Shemko, Jim Slimmon, Alvena Schnell, Joe Turnquist, Jim Wedgwood.**

SPIRIT LAKE, Sask. Dec. 29; 4 hours and 4 miles on foot, and all day about the yard; snow depth 10½ inches. 11 species, 123 individuals. Ruffed Grouse, 1; Hairy Woodpecker, 6; Downy Woodpecker, 9; Blue Jay, 1; Black-billed Magpie, 2; Black-capped Chickadee, 55; White-breasted Nuthatch, 4; House Sparrow, 20; Evening Grosbeak, 5; Pine Grosbeak, 2; Common Redpoll, 18. (Add: Sharp-tailed Grouse, 8 on Dec. 31, 22 on Dec. 30; Rock Dove, 1, Jan. 1; Great Horned Owl, 1, Dec. 23, 27, 28, 30; Snowy Owl, 1, Dec. 30; Bohemian Waxwing, 8, Dec. 22; Snow Bunting, 10, Dec. 27, 31.)—**W. Anaka, J. Gunn.**

SWIFT CURRENT, Sask. Dec. 30; 20 miles by car, 4 miles on foot in 5 hours; temp. 19° to 43°; wind W.S.W. at 22-30 m.p.h.; partly cloudy; light covering of snow in patches. 10 species, 926 individuals. Ring-necked Pheasant, 1; Gray Partridge, 12; Rock Dove, 12; Great Horned Owl, 1; Downy Woodpecker, 1; Black-billed Magpie, 5; Black-capped Chickadee, 5; Bohemian Waxwing, 13; House Sparrow, 800; Common Redpoll, 76. (Add: Robin, 1, Dec. 24; Pine Grosbeak, 4, Dec. 29; Slate-colored Junco, 1, Dec. 29.)—**Bert Hare, Marian Hare, Vince Honig, Jean McDaid** (compiler)

TULLIS, Sask. Dec. 27; 25 miles by car and 5 on foot in 3½ hours; temp. 4°; no wind; clear, clouding afternoon; no snow. 6 species, 160 individuals. Sharp-tailed Grouse, 5; Gray Partridge, 30; Snowy Owl, 1; Black-billed Magpie, 4; House Sparrow, 25; Common Redpoll, 95.—**Bob Boon, Chris Boon, Mrs. E. Boon** (compiler).

WOLSELEY, Sask. Dec. 31; 4 miles on horseback, 20 miles by truck; 4 inches snow. 12 species, 430 individuals. Rock Dove, 4; Great Horned Owl, 1; Downy Woodpecker, 1; Black-billed Magpie, 8; Black-capped Chickadee, 3; Starling, 3; House Sparrow, 300+; Red-winged Blackbird, 3; Brewer's Blackbird, 23; Pine Grosbeak, 2; Common Redpoll, 80; Hoary Redpoll, 2. (Add: Ruffed Grouse, 1, Dec. 30; Sharp-tailed Grouse, 18, Dec. 20; Gray Partridge, 7, Dec. 23.)—**Donald Hayward.**

WOODROW, Sask. Dec. 20; 49 miles by car; temp. 15°; calm; bright; 5 inches of snow; open country near Wood River and Pinto Creek. 11 species, 753 individuals. Ring-necked

Pheasant, 42; Sharp-tailed Grouse, 1; Gray Partridge, 49; Rock Dove, 4; Snowy Owl, 1; Short-eared Owl, 1; Horned Lark, 150; Black-billed Magpie, 2; Starling, 3; House Sparrow, 300; Snow Bunting, 200.—**C. H. Shulver.**

YELLOW CREEK, Sask. Jan. 1; 1½ miles for 2 hours through farmyards and light brush; temp. 30° to 35°; light wind; partly cloudy; 8 inches of snow. 6 species, 102 individuals. Pil-eated Woodpecker, 1; Black-capped Chickadee, 7; House Sparrow, 52; Pine Grosbeak, 1; Common Redpoll, 12; Snow Bunting, 29. (Add: Hairy Woodpecker, 2, Dec. 24; Downy Woodpecker, 3, Dec. 24; Black-billed Magpie, 2, Dec. 24.)—**Bohdan and Irene Pylypec.**

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COLD LAKE, Alta. Dec. 28; 27 miles by car and 1 mile on foot in 2½ hours; temp. 2°; wind W.S.W. at 7 to 10 m.p.h.; overcast with light snow; 4 inches of snow on the ground. 6 species, 38 individuals. Blue Jay, 2; Black-billed Magpie, 9; Common Raven, 3; Black-capped Chickadee, 6; Pine Grosbeak, 9; Common Redpoll, 9.—**Frank Roy, S. West.**

WETASKIWIN, Alta. Dec. 25; daylight hours about the 145-acre farm; temp. 24° in a.m., dropping to 5° by evening; overcast, with morning fog; wind E. at 6 m.p.h., shifting to N.W. at 15 m.p.h. 9 species, 120 individuals. Ruffed Grouse, 1; Gray Partridge, 6; Downy Woodpecker, 1; Blue Jay, 2; Black-billed Magpie, 4; Black-capped Chickadee, 3; Bohemian Waxwing, 1; House Sparrow, 100; Pine Grosbeak, 2. (Add: Goshawk, 1, Dec. 31; Great Horned Owl, 1, Dec. 28; Northern Shrike, 1, Dec. 26; Evening Grosbeak, 1, Dec. 26.)—**Fred H. Pegg.**

FORT SMITH, N.W.T. Dec. 29; 37 miles by truck and 3 miles on snowshoes for 6 hours; temp. -5°; wind S.S.W. at 10 m.p.h.; snow 2 feet deep in bush and 1 foot on lakes; mixed forest of jackpine, white and black spruce, birch and willow thickets and white poplar stands; a number of small lakes and sedge marshes. 5 species, 56 individuals. Ruffed Grouse, 3; Willow Ptarmigan, 29; Gray Jay, 4; Common Raven, 12; Hoary Redpoll, 8. (Add: Boreal Chickadee, 1, Dec. 24; Pine Grosbeak, 22, Dec. 24.)—**Elsie and Ernie Kuyt.**

Second Annual Manitoba Christmas Bird Count, 1963

by Lawrie B. Smith,, Winnipeg, Man.

This year 49 species were reported by 57 observers, 12 species not recorded in 1962 bringing the two-year total to 57.

Two uncommon visitors from the south were present, the Red-bellied Woodpecker which has been at feeding stations in the south of Winnipeg since early October, and 2 male Cardinals which have been in the Metro Winnipeg area since the first of December, although only one was in the count area on December 26. The vagrant Red Crossbill common in southern Manitoba this summer was represented by stragglers at Winkler and Winnipeg. Of the permanent residents in Manitoba, Gray Partridge were reported from five localities, but the only report of Ruffed Grouse was from Norway House. The northern localities have added the Spruce Grouse, Rock Ptarmigan and Willow Ptarmigan to the list of Christmas Bird Count species. The only report of a Hawk Owl this year was from Norway House. The number of Blue Jays reported from Winnipeg jumped from nine last year to 81 this year, possibly because of a good acorn crop. The seven localities reporting Ravens except for Winnipeg were all in the eastern and northern parts of the province. The ubiquitous Black-capped Chickadee was reported from all stations except Churchill, while the Boreal Chickadee was only seen in Winnipeg and Thompson. It is interesting to note that at Thompson the Boreal Chickadee was much less common than the Black-capped.

The winter visitors this year included the Goshawk, reported from three localities and a total of six Snowy Owls from four localities. Bohemian Waxwings were more common in Brandon and Winnipeg than last year. Hoary Redpolls were reported from two widely separated localities, Oak Lake and Churchill. Snow Buntings were not as plentiful as on the 1962 count.

Of the species usually classified as summer residents in Manitoba, representatives of 14 were found during the official count period, possibly as a result of the mild weather until the

end of November this fall. Some of these were the Pigeon Hawk at Oak Lake, Red-breasted Nuthatches at Winnipeg, Brown Creepers at Brandon and Winnipeg, Robins at Pointe du Bois and Winnipeg, Golden-crowned Kinglets at Brandon and Winnipeg, the Rusty Blackbird at Winnipeg, the Brewer's Blackbird at Oak Lake, and Slate-colored Juncos from no less than four localities, Pointe du Bois, Winnipeg, Winkler and Margaret.

This report owes its existence to the enthusiasm and cooperation of all the participants, particularly David Hatch who began the Manitoba Count and Harold Hosford who assisted in the compilation of the results.

Sixteen localities participated (nine for the first time), with coverage from Great Falls and Pointe du Bois in the east to Oak Lake and Brandon in the west, and from Winkler and Boissevain in the south to Thompson, Norway House and Churchill in the north.

BALMORAL, Man. Dec. 22 to 28; semi-open country with poplar woods. 9 species, 52 individuals. Goshawk, 1; Sharp-tailed Grouse, 3; Gray Partridge, 11; Snowy Owl, 1; Black-billed Magpie, 1 (Dec. 26); Black-capped Chickadee, 8; Evening Grosbeak, 3; Pine Grosbeak, 10.—**Mrs. Catherine Thexton.**

BOISSEVAIN, Man. Dec. 26. 5 species, 125 individuals. Downy Woodpecker, 1; Black-capped Chickadee, 8; Bohemian Waxwing, 56; House Sparrow, 18; Common Redpoll, 42.—**J. D. Smith.**

BRANDON (West), Man. Dec. 26. Experimental Farm; partly wooded, some barns and dwellings; 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.; overcast then clearing; temp. 9° to 4°F.; wind N.W. 5-10 m.p.h.; snow depth 14 inches; 2 party hours (1 by car, 1 on foot); 10 party miles (9 by car, 1 by foot). 6 species, 23 individuals. Hairy Woodpecker, 2; Downy Woodpecker, 2; Black-billed Magpie, 3; Black-capped Chickadee, 7; White-breasted Nuthatch, 3; Evening Grosbeak, 6.—**Mamie McCowan, Mrs. Barbara Robinson (compiler), Beverley Robinson, Dale Robinson.**

BRANDON (South), **Man.** Jan. 1; mostly residential including several spruce groves in the Fair Grounds, Agricultural School Grounds and Patmore's Nursery; 10:15 a.m. to 11:15 a.m. and 1:15 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.; mostly sunny; temp. 34° to 38°F.; wind N.W. 15-20 m.p.h. to W. 10-15 m.p.h.; snow depth 10-12 inches; 3¾ party hours on foot, 4 party miles on foot. 9 species, 66 individuals. Downy Woodpecker, 1; Black-billed Magpie, 2; Black-capped Chickadee, 3; White-breasted Nuthatch, 1; Brown Creeper, 1; Golden-crowned Kinglet, 1; Bohemian Waxwing, 9; Starling, 30; Evening Grosbeak, 18.—**E. J. Finch, Mamie McCowan** (compiler).

CHURCHILL, Man. Dec. 29; tundra and bush, composed of black spruce, birch and willow; 11:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.; clear; temp. -16°F.; wind W.N.W. 15 m.p.h.; snow depth 6 inches to 3 feet; 2 party hours (½ hour by car, 1½ hours on foot); 20 party miles (18 by car, 2 on foot). 4 species, 103 individuals. Rock Ptarmigan, 3; Raven, 17; Hoary Redpoll, 5; Snow Bunting, 78.—**C. W. Clabaugh, Boris Oszurkiewicz, Mrs. I. H. Smith** (compiler).

GREAT FALLS, Man. Dec. 26; woods, ravines and hay fields; 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.; overcast; temp. 0°F.; wind light; snow depth 6 inches; 3 party hours on foot; 4 party miles on foot. 8 species, 69 individuals. Sharp-tailed Grouse, 6; Downy Woodpecker, 2; Gray Jay, 1; Raven, 9; Black-capped Chickadee, 3; Starling, 5; House Sparrow, 25; Evening Grosbeak, 18.—**Dennis Larson, Cliff Martin** (compiler).

LANGRUTH, Man. Dec. 31; 20% open fields and marshes, 80% deciduous woods, mostly scrub; 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.; clear; temp. 34°F.; wind light; snow depth 6 inches; 5 party hours on tractor; 14 party miles on tractor. 8 species, 199 individuals. Sharp-tailed Grouse, 70; Hairy Woodpecker, 1; Downy Woodpecker, 1; Black-billed Magpie, 12; Black-capped Chickadee, 25; Pine Grosbeak, 10; Common Redpoll, 25; Snow Bunting, 55.—**Raymond O'Connor**.

MARGARET, Man. Dec. 27; deciduous woods; 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.; overcast; temp. 5°F.; wind N.W. 5-10 m.p.h.; snow depth 12 inches; 6 party hours (1½ by car, 4½ by foot); 17

party miles (12 by car, 5 on foot). 6 species, 28 individuals. Black-billed Magpie, 1; Black-capped Chickadee, 1; House Sparrow, 20; Pine Grosbeak, 3; Common Redpoll, 1; Slate-colored Junco, 2.—**E. J. "Bud" White**.

MELITA, Man. Dec. 31; rolling fields both stubble and fallow, flatland, some bluffs, part of Scuris River bottom (wooded); 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.; light to heavy overcast; temp. 35°F.; wind S.S.W. light; snow depth 5 inches; 2¼ party hours (2 hours by car, ¼ hour by foot); 47 party miles by car. 10 species, 307 individuals. Sharp-tailed Grouse, 2; Gray Partridge, 3; Snowy Owl, 1; Horned Lark, 3; Black-billed Magpie, 6; Black-capped Chickadee, 1; Northern Shrike, 1; House Sparrow, 20; Common Redpoll, 120; Snow Bunting, 150. (Add: Ring-necked Pheasant, 1; Starling, 1, Dec. 30.)—**Mr. and Mrs. David Braddell**.

OAK LAKE, Man. Dec. 28; all points within a 15 mile diameter circle centred on Oak Lake Post Office, including portions of the Assiniboine River valley; 8:15 a.m. to 5:15 p.m.; clear; temp. -21° to -6°F.; wind N.W. 5-10 m.p.h.; snow depth 10 inches; 9 party hours (6 by car, 3 on foot); 51 party miles (46 by car, 5 on foot). 17 species, 1536 individuals. Goshawk, 1; Sharp-tailed Grouse, 30; Gray Partridge, 13; Snowy Owl, 1; Hairy Woodpecker, 3; Downy Woodpecker, 2; Black-billed Magpie, 35; Black-capped Chickadee, 22; White-breasted Nuthatch, 1; House Sparrow, 218; Brewer's Blackbird, 1; Pine Grosbeak, 10; Hoary Redpoll, 11; Common Redpoll, 1150; Tree Sparrow, 1; Snow Bunting 35. (Add: Pigeon Hawk, 1; Great Horned Owl, 1; Horned Lark, 8; Northern Shrike, 1; Starling, 1.)—**David Hatch** (compiler), **Harold Hosford, Lawrie Smith**.

POINTE DU BOIS, Man. Dec. 26; 50% jack pine ridges, 50% poplar bluffs; 12:30 to 3:30 p.m.; overcast; wind N.W. moderate; temp. 2° to 4°F.; snow depth 10 inches; 3 party hours (½ hour by car, 2½ by foot); 5 party miles (2 by car, 3 by foot). 13 species, 104 individuals. Common Goldeneye, 28; Pileated Woodpecker, 1; Hairy Woodpecker, 3; Downy Woodpecker, 1; Blue Jay, 3; Black-billed Magpie, 5; Raven, 23; Black-capped Chickadee, 9; Robin, 2; Northern Shrike, 1; House Sparrow,

25; Pine Grosbeak, 2; Slate-colored Junco, 1.—**Robert Anderson, C. G. Anderson** (compiler).

SEVEN SISTERS FALLS, Man. Dec. 22; 65% deciduous woods, 15% coniferous woods, 15% cultivated fields, 5% open water on the river; 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.; clear a.m., overcast p.m.; light snow falling 3:00 p.m.; wind southerly light; temp. -12° to 0° F.; snow depth 6 inches; 6 party hours (1 by car, 5 by foot); 27 party miles (24 by car, 3 by foot). 10 species, 99 individuals. Common Goldeneye, 1; Sharp-tailed Grouse, 1; Great Horned Owl, 1; Hairy Woodpecker, 4; Downy Woodpecker, 4; Blue Jay, 3; Raven, 13; Black-capped Chickadee, 11+; White-breasted Nuthatch, 1; Evening Grosbeak, 60.—**Harold Hosford** (compiler), **Warren Johnston**.

THOMPSON, Man. Jan. 1: 20% residential, 80% coniferous forest; 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon and 3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.; overcast; temp. 34° to 20° F.; wind light a.m., N. 20 p.m.; snow depth 5 inches; 7 party hours (3 by car, 4 by foot); 41 party miles (35 by car, 6 on foot). 5 species, 64 individuals. Spruce Grouse, 4; Raven, 37; Black-capped Chickadee, 15; Boreal Chickadee, 1. (Add: House Sparrow, 3.)—**Terry Lindsay**.

WINKLER, Man. Dec. 27; flat, open, cultivated fields broken by willow and cottonwood bluffs along a creek, trees around farm building including one spruce plantation; 2:00 to 4:30 p.m.; partly cloudy; temp. 0° to -6° F.; wind N.W. 5 m.p.h.; snow depth 3 inches; $2\frac{1}{2}$ party hours ($\frac{1}{4}$ by car, $2\frac{1}{4}$ by foot); 5 party miles ($2\frac{1}{2}$ by car, $2\frac{1}{2}$ by foot). 11 species, 167 individuals. Falcon (unidentified), 1; Great Horned Owl, 1; Gray Partridge, 7; Downy Woodpecker, 2; Blue Jay, 2; Black-capped Chickadee, 3; House Sparrow, 100; Common Redpoll, 10; Red Crossbill, 4; Slate-colored Junco, 2; Snow Bunting, 35.—**Steve Ens** (compiler), **Sam Klippenstein**, **Tim Klippenstein**.

WINNIPEG, Man. Dec. 26; all points within a 15 mile diameter circle, centre Portage Ave. and St. James St., to include the banks of the Assiniboine, Red and Seine Rivers, suburbs of Assiniboia, Charleswood, Fort Garry, St. Vital, West Kildonan, and Assiniboine, Crescent, Kildonan and

St. Vital Park; deciduous woods, 55%; open fields and pastures, 25%; gardens, 10%; municipal disposal grounds, cemeteries, 10%; 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.; overcast, clearing in p.m.; temp. 4° to 10° F.; wind N.N.E. 5-10 m.p.h.; light snow falling in a.m.; snow depth 6 to 18 inches; most waters frozen; 60 party hours (14 by car, 46 on foot); 205 party miles (153 by car, 52 on foot) 32 species, 3882 individuals. Mallard, 3; Goshawk, 1; Marsh Hawk, 1; Sparrow Hawk, 1; Sharp-tailed Grouse, 6; Gray Partridge, 42; Great Horned Owl, 2; Snowy Owl, 3; Red-bellied Woodpecker, 1; Hairy Woodpecker, 15; Downy Woodpecker, 24; Blue Jay, 81; Black-billed Magpie, 7; Black-capped Chickadee, 98; Boreal Chickadee, 3; White-breasted Nuthatch, 63; Red-breasted Nuthatch, 3; Brown Creeper, 7; Robin, 3; Bohemian Waxwing, 286; Northern Shrike, 1; Starling, 238; House Sparrow, 2419; Rusty Blackbird, 1; Cardinal, 1; Evening Grosbeak, 333; Pine Grosbeak, 5; Common Redpoll, 187; Red Crossbill, 30; Slate-colored Junco, 2; White-throated Sparrow, 3; Snow Bunting, 12. (Add: Raven 3, Dec. 20; Golden-crowned Kinglet, 1, Dec. 21.)—**Dr. R. D. Bird, J. J. Burgerjon, H. Copland, F. J. Coutts, M. Dederick, A. Heidrick, H. V. Hosford, Dr. K. Johnson, W. Johnston, W. D. Kyle, Miss P. Lawson, M. McNicholl, Mr. and Mrs. H. Messop, D. Plews, E. O'Brian, B. Simmons, D. Smith, L. B. Smith, R. W. Sutton, L. Wallace; Feeding Station Operators—Mrs. Goodwin, Mr. Lesperance, Mr. H. Macdonald, Mrs. McCallum, Mrs. Pothier, Mr. A. H. Shortt, Mr. and Mrs. L. T. Simmons, Mr. A. West.**

The following report was made outside the official count period but is included since no other report was received from this part of the province.

NORWAY HOUSE, Man. Jan. 4; mixed woods and muskeg; 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.; overcast; temp. 10° F.; wind N.W. light; 9 party hours (3 by bombardier, 6 by foot); 45 party miles (36 by bombardier, 9 on foot). 5 species, 13 individuals. Sharp-tailed Grouse, 2; Gray Jay, 3; Raven, 3; Black-capped Chickadee, 3; Common Redpoll, 2. (Add: Willow Ptarmigan, 2, Dec. 23; Ruffed Grouse, 1, Hawk Owl, 1, Dec. 26.)—**Rev. S. O. Fowke**.

Attempted Predation by Peregrine Falcons

by **E. Kuyt**, Canadian Wildlife Service, Fort Smith, N.W.T.

While I was hunting ducks on the Hudson Bay sloughs near the Salt Plains Buffalo corral, about 15 miles northwest of Fort Smith, N.W.T., on September 7, 1963, I spotted six Mallards feeding along the border of a pond and attempted to creep up on them. I had come almost within range when a flock of Common Grackles, previously feeding on the muddy shore of the pond, noisily flew to the nearby bushes. I looked up just in time to see an adult female Peregrine Falcon (*Falco peregrinus*) swoop low over the ducks, pull up out of the dive and circle back for another attempt. I straightened up slowly to watch the falcon and the ducks' reaction to it. The Mallards saw me, however, and with the falcon still climbing and thus out of position, the ducks flushed, leaving me no chance to shoot. The falcon, also alarmed at my presence, did not continue the chase.

On September 30 I was duck hunting near the Embarrass River, about ten miles south of Fort Chipewyan, Alberta. During a lull in the movements of the ducks, a juvenile Peregrine Falcon stooped at a flock of unidentified small sandpipers feeding in a shallow part of a large pond. The shorebirds flew up "en masse" but quickly landed when the falcon turned for another pass. One sandpiper did not land but elected to go aloft. I expected that this bird would be quickly struck down by the predator, but, to my surprise, however, a long chase ensued. The Peregrine executed a series of short bursts, quickly gaining on its intended prey, then invariably shooting past its quarry which showed a remarkable adeptness at evasive action. At least 20 of these passes were witnessed. The falcon made climbing passes as well as downward stoops and the latter appeared to cause the sandpiper the greatest difficulties. I received the impression that the chase might go on indefinitely as falcon and sandpiper appeared evenly matched. The chase went higher and higher and downwind from my position until I first lost the "peep" from view and then the falcon, and I was unable to determine the outcome of the contest.

Even though an adult Peregrine might have done "better" than the juvenile bird, certainly the sandpiper was no "push-over". The sandpiper was well able to take care of itself when pitted against its natural enemy.

Ed. Note: Interested persons may wish to read two reports of similar observations published in the September, 1958, **Blue Jay**, p. 114. There is also an article on predation in the present issue (p. 31) in which Wayne Miller, Brandon, tells of a Marsh Hawk attacking a coot.

PRAIRIE NEST RECORDS SCHEME

The March issue of **The Blue Jay** has regularly carried the annual report of the PNRS. This year the report will appear in the June issue. Meanwhile, Bob Taylor, the new convener of scheme, wishes to urge all members interested in submitting 1964 nest records to write to him for cards and further instructions about keeping records. Those who contributed records in 1963 will receive cards automatically. Those who did not contribute in 1963 and who are writing for 1964 cards should try to indicate how many cards are needed. **Write:**

Robert R. Taylor,
Prairie Nest Records Scheme,
Blue Jay, Box 1121,
Regina, Sask.

CO-OPERATIVE SPRING MIGRATION STUDY

Records are again requested for the continent-wide survey being made under the auspices of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. As soon as it is available, we shall have a list of species for which reports are wanted; please write for the list and then submit your records by June 15, 1964, to:

Co-operative Spring Migration
Study
Blue Jay, Box 1121,
Regina, Sask.

More Plants of the Dry Prairie and Hillsides

by K. F. Best, Swift Current



Fig. 1. Hairy Golden-aster

In our series, we have moved from the dunelands through the sandhills and on to the eroded hillsides and drier portions of the open prairie. Owing to the wealth of vegetation which often goes unnoticed in these areas, we find ourselves with a multitude of species to describe, but it is difficult to find satisfactory headings under which to group them. In this issue we have a golden-aster and a goldenrod, both representative of the large family known as Compositae.

The golden-asters are a relatively small genus of about 30 or more species of herbaceous plants native to North America. The genus was christened *Chrysopsis* because of its yellow flowers, the name being derived from the Greek *chrysos*, golden, and *opsis*, aspect. The flowers resemble those of the *Aster* species, but may be distinguished by the golden tint of the outer or ray florets of the head—hence the common name of golden-aster.

These plants thrive on dry, frequently sandy or rocky locations in full sunlight. The strong, deep taproots often penetrate to depths in excess of eight feet and aid in maintaining their existence in dry places. The deep root penetration and the ability to grow on poorer, dry soils makes them valuable as soil binders. Although often abundant, they do not occur in pure stands. In some semi-desert areas these plants may provide fair forage for sheep, but under normal range conditions are usually listed as worthless for all classes of livestock.

Hairy golden-star (*Chrysopsis villosa*) is a perennial growing from a branching woody taproot to a height of from six to 24 inches. The branching stems are covered with coarse, stiff hairs, and the grayish-green alternate leaves are one to two inches long with short, stiff, appressed hairs. Sometimes the lower leaves have short stalks, but the upper leaves are generally stalkless. Flower heads are not numerous, radiate, about one inch across, and have bright yellow ray florets. Seeds are hairy achenes with a double pappus, the inner consisting of rough hairs, and the outer of small scales or minute bristles. Common on dry sandy prairies and hillsides, especially in southern portions.

The goldenrods are a large genus,

including some 130 species of the sunflower family. Attention was focused on the genus by the late Thomas A. Edison, when he discovered its slight rubber content. In ancient times certain species of goldenrod were supposed to have wound-healing properties. The generic name *Solidago*, from the Latin *solidus* and *ago*, to unite firmly, comes from this purported use and value. Goldenrods have come in for much abuse from hay fever sufferers, but, actually, very little hay fever is caused by them. Their pollen, adapted for transport by insects, is heavy and sticky, and is produced rather sparingly. It is not carried by the wind. Most hay-fever ascribed to goldenrod pollen is really caused by the light, dry, airborne pollen of the ragweeds and mugwort, which produce pollen in tremendous quantities for air transport and shed it when the goldenrods are in flower.

Most of our goldenrods are relatively low in forage value.

Velvety goldenrod (*Solidago molis*) is an erect perennial herb, eight to 18 inches in height with alternate, almost entire leaves. The plant is covered with short, very fine velvety hairs. The pale green leaves are three-nerved, from one to three inches long, the upper ones being much reduced. The inflorescence is a pyramid-shaped dense panicle of radiate yellow flower heads. The pappus consists of one or two series of rough, bristly hairs. It is common on dry prairie land and roadside, and is probably the most common species in these areas.



Fig. 2. Velvety Goldenrod

Western Snowberry



Photo by the late Dr. W. C. McCalla

Symphoricarpos occidentalis Hook.

The Western Snowberry is a common shrub around aspen groves and on dry grassy hillsides. The plants are stoloniferous and occur in dense clumps from 2-4 feet high. The flowers are pink and white and the berries are white. Like the other plants mentioned in the plant section of this **Blue Jay** the Western Snowberry can easily be found in the region south of Beechy where we plan to hold our Summer Meeting, June 5-7, 1964.

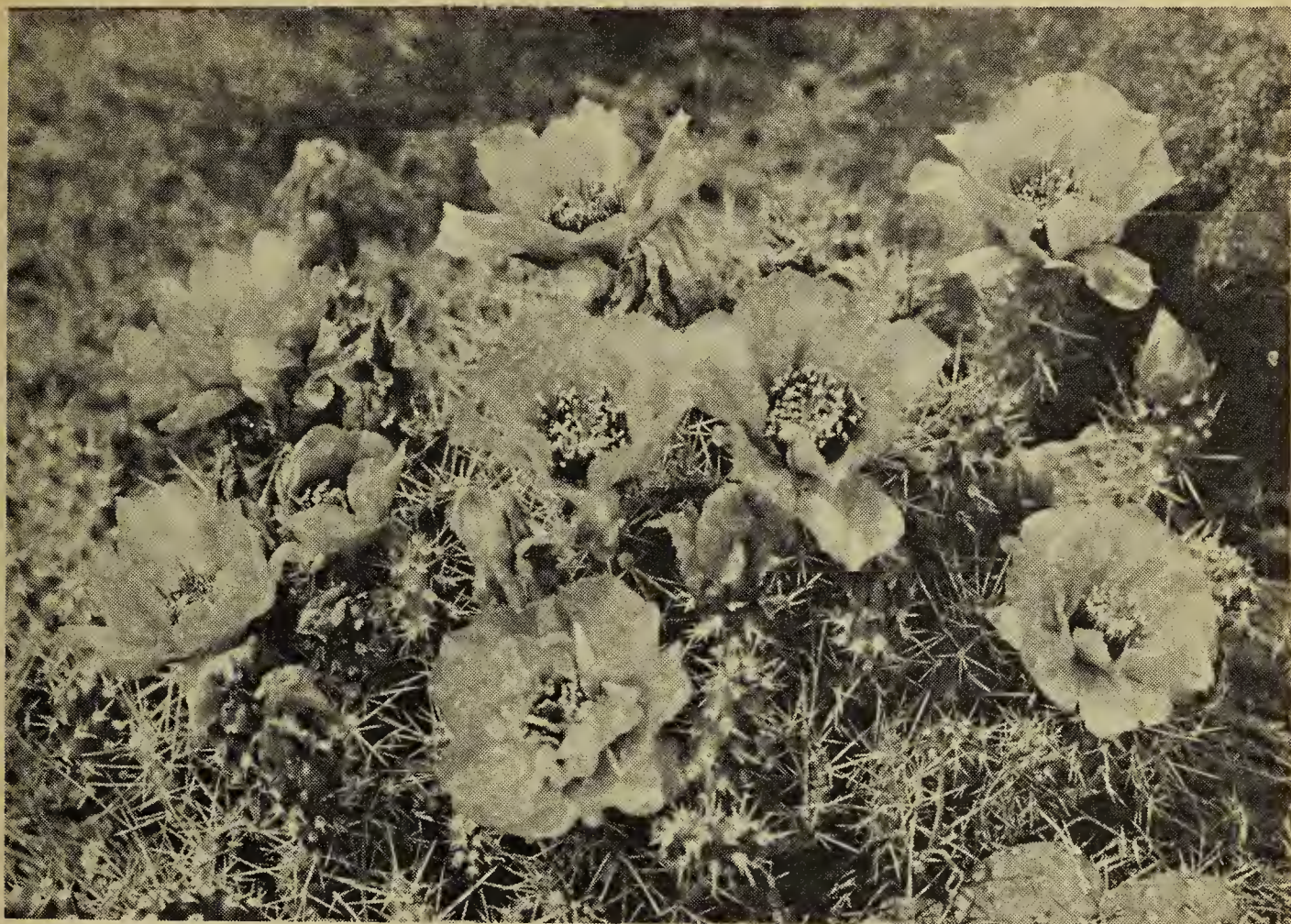


Photo by the late Dr. W. C. McCalla

Many-spined Prickly Pear, *Opuntia polyacantha* Haw.

A Further Report of "Pink" Blue Beard-tongue

by W. S. Richards, Saskatoon

In reporting on a pink form of Blue Beard-tongue (*Penstemon nitidus* Dougl.) found at Moose Jaw (**Blue Jay**, 18:132, Sept., 1960) the editor wondered if any reader had noticed colour variations in this species.

On June 8, 1963, while on a botany - photography hike near Brown's Lake, about 10 miles southwest of Saskatoon, members and friends of the Saskatoon Natural History Society were delighted when a young member found a beautiful pink Blue Beard-tongue growing on a sandy hillside. This plant, which was about 12 inches high, had three main stems, each stem having an inflorescence covering the top three inches. The colour was distinctly pink; other specimens nearby varied from blue to purplish and pinkish. No white-flowered specimens were seen. The pink-flowered plant quickly became the centre of interest for all the photographers, and many lingered

to take extra "shots" after the main group had passed on.

The Slender Beard-tongue (*P. procerus* Dougl.) and the Lilac-flowered Beard-tongue (*P. gracilis* Nutt.) were also both common in this area. According to J. H. Hudson we were just at the northern limit of the range of a fourth species, the White-flowered Beard-tongue (*P. albidus* Nutt.) but we did not see any on this field trip.

Finding an unusual colour form in any native species always provides a pleasant surprise. In the vicinity of Saskatoon I have noticed white varieties of the Spider Flower (*Cleome serrulata* Pursh) usually pink, Canada Thistle (*Cirsium arvense* (L.) Scop.) generally purple, and Blue Lettuce (*Lactuca* sp.) generally blue. I have also frequently found blue-flowered specimens of Moss Phlox (*Phlox hoodii* Rich.) which is normally white.

Junior Naturalists

SPRING ACTIVITIES AND ADVENTURES

by **Joyce Deutscher**, Saskatchewan
Museum of Natural History

Bothered by spring fever? Good! Now is the time to start looking for signs of spring in earnest and one of the first of these is that case of spring fever you have. Another early sign of spring is the tanned and freckled faces that are appearing by now on you and your friends.

My note book tells me that on March 22, 1963, children coming into the Museum for tours were taking on a definite tanned appearance. The next day sage and strawberry plants were growing profusely, bluebirds, Marsh Hawks, and crows were back and only one lone ice fisherman remained off Swanston's Point on Last Mountain Lake.

Are you ready then with pencil, paper, a sharp eye and an enquiring mind? Then outside you go, sniff the fresh spring air and start your explorations.

1. Look for winter rosettes—

Some plants produce a small circlet of leaves which stays green all winter long and is attached to the stem close to the ground. The first leaves to start growing in the spring frequently have quite a different appearance from those in this winter rosette. Look for these as well. Make a note of what you see.

2. Check your adopted tree—

Did you adopt a tree last winter? (See **Blue Jay**, December, 1963) If not, do so now and watch carefully for the first signs of new growth. Press leaves and flowers. Remember that all tree flowers do not have bright showy petals. Some do not even have petals, and are frequently mistaken for new leaves when seen from a distance. Don't think your tree doesn't have flowers. All mature trees have.

3. Start a plant list—

Many of you keep a spring bird migration list but how many of you keep a plant list? See if you can recognize a plant when its leaves first appear above ground. If you can't, watch it until it blooms. Keep your

notes for comparison next year. You can learn to recognize many plants by their leaves alone with a little practice.

Quick sketches of early spring plants help you remember them. Make notes as to the shade of green the leaves are, when they are first seen and when the bloom appears. Sometimes our early spring plants surprise us and bloom again in the fall. I see in my note book that an Early Yellow Loco-weed bloomed on September 15, 1963, and is one of our earliest spring flowers!

4. Make a table top arrangement of spring plants—

Use only the common ones here and don't be afraid to experiment. See if you can have a "spring bouquet" before the spring crocus anemone blooms. Use tree buds and green leaves. You don't need to know their names. Use stink weed if you wish, providing no one objects to your bringing "that weed" inside. Add a branch of bright red rose hips from last year's roses, and moss, too, if you can find some. Mostly use your imagination. Now arrange your plants in a bowl, or on a tray using plasticine if need be to hold the branches upright.

These are a few suggestions of what you can do with plants. You will get more ideas as you work.

I have been talking mostly about plants. If you look at the contest which is announced this issue you will see why. The contest sounds like fun too, doesn't it, so why don't you enter it? You may not win first prize but you can have a lot of fun trying and will learn a great deal and that, after all, is the important thing. Don't forget to use your notebook. Notice how I used my notebook several times in writing this article.

PLANT STUDY CONTEST

How are you coming with your Bird Study Contest (**Blue Jay**, December, 1963)? You are, I hope, ready to start working on another contest as well. All boys and girls successfully completing the Plant Study Contest will be mentioned in the December Honor Roll. Prizes will be

awarded for the best entries. All entries will be returned to the sender after judging is complete.

Contest Rules:

Entries must be accompanied by the sender's name, age and address. Send entries to Mrs. Joyce Deutscher, **Blue Jay Contest**, Saskatchewan Museum of Natural History, Regina, to arrive not later than October 1. Judging will be done according to age. Children 11 and under need do only No. 1. Children 12 and over do both No. 1 and No. 2.

1. Collect and identify 10 different wild flowers from your locality. Include the following information with each—the date collected, the name of the flower, the place collected (name the nearest town) and the habitat (marsh, prairie, woodland, disturbed area, etc.).

2. Make a study of a common wild flower. Keep the following information on it—date leaves first seen, date of flowering, date seeds ripen, method of seed dispersal, any signs of animals using the plant (leaves eaten by insects, seeds eaten by birds, etc.), any other information you can add about the plant.

Note: A mimeographed leaflet "Collecting and Pressing Plants," may be obtained free of charge by writing to The Extension Division, Museum of Natural History, Regina.

GIANT WEED

by Glenn Fairweather, age 8, Piapot

One day I brought a prostrate pigweed to Petain school. It had 39 branches, each about 24 inches long. This was a total of 78 feet. It was full of small black shiny seeds. It had grown in a pig pen where the soil was fertilized with manure. It covered the floor like a mat.

JULY'S FLOWERS

by Elisabeth Wagner, age 9, Regina

During July my cousin from Toronto and I made a book of July prairie wild flowers. The book was called "July's Flowers" and was made so that my cousin could take the flower book back to Toronto to show her friends what prairie wild flowers are like.

We had to keep the book out of the hands of my little brother and if we forgot where we had put it we could locate it again by the smell of the two-grooved milk-vetch. We enjoyed pressing the flowers and placing them in the book very much.

This spring I think I shall make a book of June flowers because I think the flowers are prettiest at that time of year.

MARSH HAWK ATTACKS COOT

by Wayne Miller, age 12, Regina

In the latter part of last summer, September 17, to be exact, part of our bird group was out to Ashbury Marsh, behind Griswold. Our main objective was to bring in and renew some of our bird nesting boxes.

It was a lovely day, hawks were circling above us, the marsh was covered with coots, and ducks, and a few smaller wading birds were scattered here and there. At lunch we lock up just in time to see a Goshawk whiz past us.

Then we noted a juvenile Marsh Hawk skimming over the marsh. We decided to watch him through our field glasses for a while. To our amazement, the hawk singled out a coot and attempted grabbing it. After trying this several times it changed tactics, trying to force the coot to stay under water and grab it as soon as it ascended to breathe. Meanwhile, everyone was surveying this sight very carefully. The coot was exhausted. Realizing the futility of trying to be evasive, it lay limp and helpless on the water. Taking advantage of such an opportune moment, the hawk lifted the coot clear of the water. It slipped. Instead of resuming the fight, the hawk turned and went away empty handed. As for the coot, it lay on the water and got up after a few minutes.

We didn't get as many boxes down as we would have liked to, but we all agreed with our leader, Mr. Lane, when he stated that viewing this performance would make up for our loss. Don't you?

Mr. ISINGER'S STUDENTS BUILD BIRDHOUSES

by **Bohdan Pylypec**, age 13,
Yellow Creek

This last spring, Mr. Isinger, our teacher, encouraged his Grade Seven and Eight students to build birdhouses and set a prize for the best one. Six boys entered, building one martin house, one chickadee house, and four wren houses. Steve Tokarchik won the prize for his martin house.

I built the wren house decorated with maple and oak leaves but had no luck because the house was not occupied by House Wrens. Maybe it was too late when I put it up or perhaps wrens prefer houses that look quite natural. I first made holes too big in these houses so the House Sparrows interfered. To settle this I made smaller holes in some fibre board and then attached this over the bigger holes. I then emptied the houses with sparrow nests inside.

A pair of House Wrens nested in an unpainted wren house near our house. Two other pairs nested in pieces of hollowed tree trunks which were given a top and bottom. Another pair of wrens nested in a birdhouse intended for a bluebird. The pair of House Wrens which last year nested in a cow skull set on a fence post and hatched one albino (**Blue Jay**, XX; 170, Dec., 1962), this year again occupied the skull. I saw this albino again this spring, but could not locate its home.

BURIED ALIVE

by **Bill Grasnick**, age 13,
Thorsby, Alberta

Last winter we had a blizzard. The weather turned mild for a very short time and then it became very cold again.

I noticed that the partridges which used to come to our green feed stacks, no longer did so. But a lone, scrawny coyote did. I saw him when I was doing chores. He was sniffing in and around the stacks. Then he began to dig. To my surprise he dug out a partridge. He saw me and trotted

away with a partridge in his mouth. About two hours later my father who came back from a neighbor's reported seeing a coyote digging around the stacks and coming up with a partridge.

Next morning when Dad and I went out to do the chores, we saw two coyotes near the stacks. One was digging while the other was sniffing the snow here and there. They were so intent on their work that they did not seem to notice us until we were close to them. The digging one came up with a partridge when we were a mere fourteen or fifteen yards away from him.

It dawned on me why I couldn't see partridges. They were buried alive under the hard snow.

OUR PORCUPINE

by **Sheila Purvis**, age 12, Redvers

Two years ago in February we found a porcupine beside our bale stack, behind the barn. It was about three-quarters grown.

When my father would go near it, it would bury its head in the bale stack and only show its quills. The quills of the porcupine would go into my father's rubber boot. The only way it could be picked up was by slipping his hand under its stomach.

In the house it would hide under my father's chair or behind his legs. The only sound it made was when it whimpered like a puppy. The only time we could touch it without mitts on our hands was to pat it on the head. When my father was carrying it to the house and when he went to open the door, he held it too close to his body. Then he got quills in his overalls. In the house it would eat cabbage by holding the food in its paws and nibbling at it.

It would eat the bark off our Manitoba maple trees. It went over to our neighbour's place and their dog got quills in his nose, and dad worried about the cows when the porcupine was around the barn. So he took our porcupine about 3 miles north of our place and let it go in a slough full of willow trees.

Editor's Note: The preceding story was sent to us by Marion Nixon who writes: "If Sheila's contribution is used, she will be a third generation contributor. A sketch of 'Shooting-stars' which her mother made when young, and I sent to Mrs. Priestly was used in the **Blue Jay** a few years ago. (sketch by Jay Nixon). I wonder if there are any others?"

RUN RABBIT RUN

by Jack Endall, Brandon

The Saturday following the first snowfall of the year I was with my family returning to Brandon by car. It was a bright sunny winter's day and we travelled the roads rather than the highway in hopes we might see winter birds.

About one mile north of Rapid City I saw an eagle swoop down in a field beside the road. He missed whatever he was trying to catch and then flew along the fence line searching for something for his lunch. Twice he flew across the road and Dad stopped the car so we could get out and have a better view of the Eagle. We wondered if it could be a golden eagle as the bright sunshine showed yellowish feathers under his wings and tail. His wing span must have been about seven feet.

Suddenly he spied a small rabbit and dived down to try to catch him. The rabbit leaped into the air; perhaps one of those long talons scraped his back, but I think that leap saved his life, for as he fell to the ground he rushed with leaps and bounds across the field. At this point in the road there is another road almost parallel to the one on which we were parked. The rabbit must have known where he was going for he scuttled across the road and into a culvert. Mr. Eagle must have known the country too for he flew to the other end of the culvert to wait; hovering in the air. We waited ten minutes, but could wait no longer and drove off. I wonder what happened to the rabbit?

HUMMINGBIRD VISITOR

by Carolyn Johnson, age 13, Parkman

One afternoon during the summer holidays, I took a glance out the window and saw a queer sort of a bird. It was near the flowers and went from flower to flower putting its long

bill in the flower. Its bill was about $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches long and about as round as a needle. It seemed to be sucking out nectar from the flower. Its wings seemed to go around and around. At first my thought was a butterfly but it was larger and just stayed in the air when putting its bill in the flower. And a butterfly sits on the flower. Its colour was reddish and greenish and the bird was bigger than a butterfly but about the size of a small mouse.

Later I looked in a bird book to find out what it was and found it was a hummingbird.

A HORNED LARK IN WINTER

by Phillip Olszewski, age 9, Kamsack

Last Friday night (November 15, 1963) a Horned Lark came and sat on the window sill. It kept flying on the window because we had the lights on. We gave it some crumbs but it didn't eat them. Then my big brother went outside and caught the bird. He brought it into the house. It was a beautiful bird. Then my brother went outside and let it go.

Note: Do you know that a few Horned Larks usually winter over in Saskatchewan, especially in the extreme south? This has been a mild winter so perhaps some of you have seen Horned Larks wintering.

BEST LETTER CONTEST AND RESULTS

Two prizes are awarded this issue—one to the youngest contributor Glenn Fairweather of Piapot, who was curious about a large pig weed, and the other to Bill Grasnick who observed activities around a feed stack.

Several entries deserve honorable mention but this would include almost all those sent in. The one by Jack Endall, although well written, could not be considered for a prize because no age was given.

Be sure to put your name, age and address on all letters so they can be entered in the letter writing contest. Send entries to **Blue Jay** Contest, Mrs. Joyce Deutscher, Saskatchewan Museum of Natural History, Regina. Deadline for next issue April 15.

Muskox Skull Found at Grandview, Man.

by Watson Crossley, Grandview

The finding of a skull of the modern species of muskox (*Ovibos moschatus*) in a gravel deposit at Grandview is the first recorded finding of a skull of these animals in the prairie provinces, according to authorities at the Museums in Winnipeg and Regina. Of interest also is the fact that the gravel deposit in which the find was made is very near to the western shoreline of glacial Lake Agassiz, which may be an important factor in determining the probable age of the skull.

Apparently the muskoxen during the glaciated period were forced as far south as Kentucky. As the ice front retreated to the north and vegetation became re-established, they would follow the retreating ice until they reached their present range, north of Churchill.

Grandview is located in a valley that extends some miles west to the height of land connecting the Duck and Riding Mountains. During the period when the glacial lake was at its highest, this valley obviously formed a bay in the lake. The western boundary of the ancient lake has been recognized at an altitude of 1400 feet in the so-called "Herman Beaches" extending around the foot of the hills. As the lake cut deeper outlets south into the Mississippi drainage system, the level of the lake continued to drop. At a point 20 miles east of Grandview, where Highway No. 10 runs north through the village of Ashville, the lake level became stabilized for a considerable period allowing the well-defined "Campbell Beaches" to be formed at an altitude of 1100 feet. As the lake dropped to this level, the rivers draining the hills to the west continued to deposit gravel at the mouth of these rivers in the actual lake. As the lake kept dropping a new deposit would form further east. Further study may determine the origin and probable age of this deposit.



Photo by W. Crossley
Muskox Skull

It seems to a layman and an amateur that there are some indications that the gravel deposit where the fossil was found was laid down by the Valley River when it was still emptying into Lake Agassiz at this point which has an altitude of 1350 feet, some 50 feet below the greatest height of the lake. I understand the latest additions to the "Campbell Beaches" are considered by some geologists to be 11,000 years old. If further study of the deposit should verify that it was laid down in Lake Agassiz well before the formation of the "Campbell Beaches", it would pretty well determine that the age of the skull was older than that date. However, someone better qualified than I am will have to determine that.

Regardless of its age, the find is of interest. The skull itself is in fair state of preservation, being readily identifiable from photographs submitted to the Museums. At the present time it is in my small museum on the farm north of Grandview.

Some Interesting Lynx Observations

by Dave Santy, Beechy

Two young lads, Dennis (11) and Laurie (10), sons of Mr. and Mrs. Harold Pennes, living about seven miles northwest of Beechy, solved the problem of the continuing depreciation of their chicken flock last summer (1963). Playing in the farm yard one day in late August they were startled when a huge cat fairly flew out of a tree in the shelter belt, pounced on a chicken, and carried it away from almost under their feet. They followed through the trees to see the cat with its prey disappear into the trees around a pothole in the adjacent summerfallow field. The boys ran to the house to inform their father of the incident. Armed with a shotgun, Mr. Pennes could find no trace of the thief. He explained to the boys that it undoubtedly was a wild cat, a lynx, in fact.

The boys were immediately filled with a spirit of adventure. They would catch that cat if it ever came back to steal their chickens. They found a quantity of ravelled baling twine and went to work making snares according to their own ideas and set them up in the tree and around beneath it. As with boys of that age the thrill of the moment was soon forgotten and they went on into further adventure. The snares were merely part of their play and were not checked again. A couple of weeks later they happened to play at the same place and were surprised to find a lynx suspended from a branch of the tree, head downward and firmly held in place by the two hind legs in one of their play snares. The head of the lynx was about four feet off the ground. The unfortunate animal must have been caught soon after the snares were set for when we were called to the scene we noted that decomposition was already beginning.

* * *

About two weeks later Lawrence Herzberg, a 19-year-old helper on the Martin Flynn farm, six miles north of Beechy, had a rather exciting experience with another lynx. Cultivating a big acreage stubble field he was confronted midway in the furrow by a lynx sitting directly in his

path. As the machinery approached it made no move to get out of the way. Lawrence stopped the machinery but left the tractor running in neutral. Immediately, the lynx ran around to the right side of the tractor and sprang at him. It was able to hold to the rubber tread of the high drive wheel, but had difficulty getting a claw grip on the metal fender. This gave Lawrence time to reach under the tractor seat where a clawhammer was suspended. With the hammer he reached over and dealt the big cat a blow on the side of its neck. It dropped to the ground and was bracing for another spring, whereupon the young man grabbed a heavy coat he was using as a seat cushion and vigorously shook this back and forth in front of the animal. This seemed to deter it so that it walked away. Lawrence lost no time in lifting the cultivator out of work position. He moved the tractor into road gear and hied for home.

COMMENTS ON LYNX INVASION

Biologists and naturalists are generally aware that a major invasion of the Lynx (*Lynx canadensis*) has occurred in the Prairie Provinces and in the adjacent States over the last two years. The two observations reported above, from the district where we intend to hold our summer meetings in June, 1964, are but two of many such sightings.

The movement of the Lynx from its usual habitat in the northern Boreal Forest has given many people their first opportunity to see this beautiful animal. It is unfortunate that the encounter between man and animal so often ends with the death of the great northern forest cat. Low populations of the Snowshoe Rabbit, which is the major prey species of the Lynx, may explain the presence of the Lynx out on the plains several hundreds of miles from its usual habitat.

We would like to urge our members and interested people to submit any records of the Lynx which they may

have. We have heard, for instance, that a large number have been captured alive in the city of Calgary. We have heard, also, of many newspaper articles describing the demise of a lynx. We would like to collect all the information we can on the Lynx invasion, so please send your records and have other interested people send their records to the **Blue Jay** editors, Box 1121, Regina. Our objectives are twofold: to record the behaviour of this interesting animal, even under these unusual circumstances, and to document its occurrence, in order to record permanently this astonishing forced movement of a wildlife species. Fifty years from now this information will be extremely interesting and valuable. The November, 1963, issue of **North Dakota Outdoors**, official publication of the State Game

and Fish Department of that state, gives a fine report of the situation in that area in an article entitled "The Lynx Explosion".

It is unfortunate that the Wildlife Branch of the Saskatchewan Department of Natural Resources and the Saskatchewan Museum of Natural History are not in a position to properly document, study, and report to the public such widespread and interesting wildlife phenomena. It has been explained that they do not have the time or resources to do this. We should therefore urge our legislators to provide the additional staff where needed in these agencies in order to ensure that proper attention is paid to wildlife on our behalf, on the public's behalf, and on the behalf of wildlife itself.—**Blue Jay** Editors.

Further Comments on Whistling Snowshoe Rabbits

by **Helge S. Abrahamson**, Sylvan Lake, Alberta

In the September, 1963, issue of the **Blue Jay** there is an interesting article by R. R. Hooper: "Saw-whet Owl—the case of the whistling rabbit." Hooper states that in the Punnichy district of Saskatchewan some Indians believe that the Snowshoe Rabbit or Varying Hare is the source of a peculiar whistling sound heard at night. Hooper identifies this instead as the call of the little owl called the Saw-whet Owl.

I have lived all my life in the Sylvan Lake district of Alberta and have observed Snowshoe Rabbits on many occasions. My house is located in a heavily wooded area of poplar trees where these rabbits are very abundant. Many times upon hearing the whistling I have slowly edged toward the apparent source of the sound and with the aid of a powerful flashlight have found a rabbit. When I stood still for some length of time the rabbit resumed its whistling, and was then only about 40 feet away from me. When I turned my flashlight upon it once more, it quickly stood up on its hind legs, ceased whistling, turned around, then quickly moved away some distance before resuming its whistling act.

In the 1930's this area contained a few of the now scarce Saw-whet Owls which also give a whistling call. However, the rabbit's whistling is much more highly pitched and can readily be traced to its source whereas the call of the owl often seems to be coming from a distant point.

The call of the Saw-whet Owl is usually heard in the night from February to April. The rabbit's whistle is usually heard in the night, but often throughout the day, starting early in March and continuing until early June. I believe that these whistling sounds are the respective mating calls of the Saw-whet Owl and the Snowshoe Rabbit.

BOOKS WANTED

We buy books on birds, animals, amphibians, botany, wild flowers, mosses, fungi and related material. Send list for offer, we pay shipping.

Seven Seas Book Service
Box 15, Station "J"
Toronto 6, Ontario

George Revell: Conservationist and Game Guardian

by R. D. Symons, Regina



G. Revell with dog train, Primrose Lake

From the Pas, Manitoba to Cold Lake, Alberta, few men were held in higher esteem and respect than George Revell, one of the early game officers of Saskatchewan.

George Revell was born at Newton Abbot, Devonshire, in 1888. He came at an early age to Manitchba. In 1917 he joined the R.N.W.M.P. and was sent to "E" Division at Prince Albert. Later, because of his life-long interest in wildlife, he wanted to associate himself with conservation and the protection of our resources. In 1920, on the recommendation of Superintendent Rutledge, Officer Commanding at Prince Albert, Revell was gazetted as Provincial Game Guardian, under the late Fred Bradshaw, the Game Commissioner.

Revell, and others like him, became game guardians because they were convinced of the importance of their work, because of the contribution it could make to conservation. As Bradshaw used to say when he sent his game guardians out: "It's not just a job, it's an opportunity."

Revell was sent to patrol an enormous country from the Manitoba border to Prince Albert and indefinitely north. He travelled thousands of miles in the bush, camping when overtaken by night. He travelled on snowshoes with a back-pack, or by dog-train, saddle horse or team.

canoes and boats, gas "jigger" on the Hudson Bay Railway, and when occasion demanded, the caboose of a freight train with his faithful dogs curled up in an empty box car. The train crews were co-operative and thoughtful, and the engineer was always willing to stop the train for Revell to unload and head into the bush.

In 1932, with the formation of the Department of Natural Resources, Revell was retained to become a Field Officer, Land Inspector and Forest Ranger. At that time he was sent to Cold Lake to clean up the Alberta border. His patrols took him to Primrose Lake and Ile à la Crosse, as well as to the Beaver River-Meadow Lake-Green Lake area. In 1937 he took over the Battleford district and later was sent to Strasbourg where he was stationed until 1945.

Far from roads, with no communications, with transportation limited to dogs, horses or foot travel, spending days and often weeks in a wilderness country, subject to all the hazards of weather, swollen streams and shortage of food, Revell was left on his own to make successful investigations and arrests in the face of (nearly always) superior numbers of armed and often dangerous men. Is it any wonder that Superintendent Rutledge said of Revell and of game



Photo by G. Revell

Nest of Ring-billed Gull, Last Mountain Lake

guardians in general, they "literally carried their lives in their hands, by night and by day, year after year"?

What was Revell's reward? The sum of \$120.00 per month, reduced in the years of the great drought to \$75.00 per month. But no one grumbled, for men such as this had sworn to do their duty without fear or favour. Revell never broke that oath, and as he faithfully discharged his duties of law enforcement, he helped to establish the idea of protecting wild animals from selfish or irresponsible hunting. In districts which he patrolled a respect for conservation was thus imposed.

Many tales could be told of the suffering and danger of Revell's long patrols. I shall tell of two of these incidents, briefly.

On one occasion—in winter—Revell was on routine patrol by team and sleigh. Following suspicious tracks he came to a new winter camp snuggled in the heavy spruce near the Middle Muskeg River. Six illegal fur trappers, armed and hostile, were in possession. Revell disarmed them, emptied their rifles and seized all ammunition. Still keeping control over them, he seized illegal furs to the value of \$3,000 which he packed in his sleigh. He then ordered them to march ahead of his team, each carrying his empty rifle as an impediment, over the long and weary miles to Meadow Lake where they were tried and convicted.

On his return to his cabin at Pierce Lake he bundled the furs into a tree-cache, for he was off again on another "job" and could not then take

time to send them to Regina. During his absence Mrs. Revell stood guard over this government property with a loaded shotgun.

On another occasion he disappeared for a week into the wild bush towards Primrose Lake. Mr. Barns, at Barns' Crossing on the Beaver said, "I saw George 'coming in' a week later (on foot) herding five men ahead of him. I said to him, 'What have you got, George—the Russian Army?'" Revell had found these Alberta fur thieves "shacked up" and had taken appropriate action. From Barns he got a team and sleigh to convey the prisoners to Meadow Lake.

These typical incidents in the life of a game guardian show us the sense of dedication which upheld George Revell. Where such men enforced the Game Act, the poacher was bold indeed who attempted to ply his trade, and the game-hog soon became convinced that he must abide by the law or take the consequences. In the annals of game and wildlife conservation the name of Revell stands out as an inspiration.

George Revell lives quietly and simply today in our city of Regina.

THE NENE GOOSE OF HAWAII

A watercolour drawing of a pair of Nene Geese (see back cover) on the volcanic slopes of Hawaii will be the 1964-65 Migratory Bird Hunting Stamp. Each waterfowl hunter in the United States is required to purchase this \$3 "duck stamp" in addition to his regular State hunting license. The revenue is used for the development of migratory bird refuges and habitat.

The 87 artists who entered the 15th annual "duck stamp" contest had been urged to show species of waterfowl not appearing on the 30 previous issues of stamp. The prize winning design, showing a fully protected species which may not be hunted anywhere, was drawn by Stanley Stearns of Stevensville, Maryland.

The Nene Goose (pronounced "nay-nay"), one of the rarest of all waterfowl, is seriously threatened with extinction. The birds are native only in the Hawaiian Islands and in the wild they live only at elevations of between 5,000 and 8,000 feet. Their feet, now, are only partly webbed.

The Blue Jay Bookshelf

RUNES OF THE NORTH. By Sigurd F. Olson. 1963. 256 pp., illustrations by Robert Hines. Alfred A. Knopf, New York. \$4.95 U.S.A. (Distributed in Canada by McClelland & Stewart, Ltd.)

Sig Olson was born in Chicago. He now lives in Ely, Minnesota, a jumping-off place for the famed Quetico-Superior canoe country (a part of "Le Beau Pays"). The wilderness of northern Saskatchewan, Manitoba and country still farther north into the Yukon, the Northwest Territories and Alaska are not strange to him (they are his "pays d'en haut"). There is great contrast between the "beau pays" and the "pays d'en haut" and the book is thus divided. The illustrations beautifully blend with and enhance the text.

It is natural, as one works the rivers and lakes by canoe and *hand paddle only*, to absorb the "magic and mystery" of country traversed.

"A tale of magic and mystery"; this is the general meaning of a rune. Sig Olson gathered in some powerful tales. They are of such nature that they should never be revealed second-hand in a review.

In wilderness travel, under your own power and without mechanical aids, you indeed acquire a feeling for a bit of country, or river and lake passages. It then becomes easier to talk with natives and others who likewise have been or become part of a pristine land. You are no longer a stranger or an outsider. You have grown inwardly more contemplative and you can reach outward with greater perspective. Your bonds with nature become strengthened and more directly simple. You begin to feel as countless others did for a millenium before you. You shuck off thin and deceptively false veneers of gadgetry and mechanical aids.

The frost, the mist, the wind, the waves, the birds, the trees, the cracking of the fire, the soft glide of the current, the mad rush of the rapids, the lichens on the rocks, the fears and the hopes, the curiosity and the courage of people, the "shining mountains"; these are forces that have molded runes down through the ages. And there are those yet unborn who will want to fashion runes.

The pace of *Runes of the North* was strangely akin to that of running a river; always after a rapids there is a quietness in which to ponder. Herein may lie one of the fundamental processes of re-creation; or, as we now write it "recreation". Whether or not the author deliberately ordered this remarkable "pacing", he does give the reader many places to pause and reflect.

I was impressed by the large number of insights revealed within the runes. I particularly liked this one: "We left no mark on the country itself, but the land had left its mark on us." I liked it because it reminded me of Robert Frost and a chat we'd had when I told him his poetry had a "strong sense of wilderness." This was a new twist for him and his curiosity was always strong.

Sig Olson, through two of his books, *The Lonely Land* and *Runes of the North*, has given Saskatchewan a treasure. What he has to say about wilderness interpretation and preservation is valuable to the province.

Listen carefully, people of Saskatchewan, to this excerpt from one of his "runes":

"It may well be that with their [the Indians' and Eskimos'] help the Canadian north, with its vast expanses of primeval country, can restore to modern man a semblance of balance and completeness. In the long run, these last wild regions of the continent might be worth far more to North Americans from a recreational and spiritual standpoint than through industrial exploitation. If this vision could be realized, even in part, these people might once more be proud of their heritage."

—Douglas E. Wade, Regina.

ANIMAL AND BIRD CARDS

The Brooke Bond (Red Rose and Blue Ribbon) card sets Nos. 2, 3 and 4 are now available from the **Blue Jay Bookshop**. Each set contains 48 cards. The card sets are available at 25¢ each and the albums are 50¢ each. Send your money to the **Blue Jay Bookshop**, Box 1121, Regina.

Notes and Letters

A BIRDING PARADISE

A year ago, we read in **Audubon** that Mrs. Asa Wright of Spring Hill Estate, Arima, Trinidad, would take paying guests. January 31, 1963, we left Toronto by jet to spend two weeks on Mrs. Wright's cocoa plantation. She was a most charming hostess and Lawrence Calderon, a taxi-driver from Arima, was always available for an expedition. He was familiar with the birds, their songs and their habitats and was invaluable as a guide-driver.

Since Trinidad is only a few miles from the coast of South America many of the birds are from that continent. But birding on Spring Hill Estate is relatively easy. We identified nearly 100 different birds, including oil-birds, toucans, bell-birds, benedictines, nine kinds of tanagers, innumerable flycatchers, many quits, and hummingbirds galore. Pygmy owls called day and night and one frequently sat in a mango tree by the house. Most of these birds and many others could be seen from the screened porch of Mrs. Wright's house. Little wonder that her guest book contains the names of many famous naturalists from both sides of the Atlantic. It was only a short drive to the Caroni Swamp to see boat-billed and streaked herons, fork-tailed flycatchers, water tyrants, jacanas, and the beautiful scarlet ibis. We hated to leave.

On our way home from Trinidad we spent a week at Tobago and a week at Montego Bay in Jamaica. The highlight of our week at Tobago was a two-mile trip by boat to Little Tobago to see the greater birds of paradise. For identification, we relied on **Birds of the West Indies** by James Bond and **Birds of Trinidad and Tobago** by G. A. C. Herklots, both published by Collins.

If you are contemplating a winter holiday, we can whole-heartedly recommend Mrs. Wright's cocoa plantation. Botanists and entomologists will also find it a paradise.—**Rheta Field**, Tillsonburg, Ontario.

Ed. Note: Miss Field (199 Rolph Street, Tillsonburg) and her friends are planning a birding trip west in 1964. Saskatchewan people have been invited to write her of the birds to

be seen in their area and to tell her the best time to see them. Perhaps her plans can include a visit to your part of the province. I'm sure they would find our summer meeting very interesting if they can fit that weekend into their trip.

WILDLIFE OF GHANA

Ghana, formerly the Gold Coast, has 91,843 square miles and over 900 species of birds. I believe Saskatchewan has 251,700 square miles and just over 300 bird species.

Vultures are very common in Ghana. I can see five circling the adjacent field now as I look out my window. In the villages you can find them perched on the roof-tops and in the streets. They are awkward on the ground but when airborne they fascinate me with their effortless ability to glide. They are protected by the government because of the role they play as scavengers.

The Black-shouldered Kite is a common and colourful bird on the Accra Plains. It is a little smaller than the Canadian Marsh Hawk. Any time one is walking or driving through the savanna he will see this kite hovering forty to fifty feet above the ground. Once he selects his prey he closes his wings and drops to about a foot up when talons and wings are extended. I would say seventy-five percent of their strikes are successful.

Almost every morning I can watch the white Cattle Egrets catching toads from one of our flower beds. The egrets first flush the toads out of the flowers then pursue them across the lawn.

Being western Canadians from Grenfell we had some trouble adjusting to the lizards. They are everywhere. Around our house we have three basic types: the Agama, the Skink and the Gecko. The agamas are attracted by food. They love peanuts. Two or three will probably be watching you as you have lunch on the patio. The male is brightly coloured, having a red head and neck with yellow flecks, a blue-black body and an orange tail. This lizard is ten to

twelve inches long. The females are smaller and duller. Each male has a harem which he keeps within a certain area.

The skinks are the most colourful of the lizards. They are smooth and streamlined. You find some with greenish backs and orange-red sides that shine in the sun. Some have brown backs and a lovely blue tail. The little gecko is nocturnal and it crawls around the ceiling and walls at night catching mosquitoes and other small insects.

We live about 600 yards from the sea, yet there are very few sea birds. There is the odd tern and a few waders plus the Pied Crow. The crow is about the size of a Common Raven but he has a white collar and vest. The crow keeps the beaches clean and some mornings, early, they hold a noisy convention in our garden.—**Major Scott K. Bricker**, Tamale, Ghana.

CLIFF SHAW MEMORIAL

The Cliff Shaw Memorial Award is presented in memory of a true friend of our Saskatchewan Natural History Society. A former editor of the **Blue Jay**, Mr. Shaw, a newspaperman by trade, was a member of the Manitoba Natural History Society, a secretary of the Regina Natural History Society and a former president of the Yorkton and Saskatchewan Natural History Societies.

He was a man of many talents, and his friendliness and appreciation of all things in nature made a marked impression on all who knew him. It is indeed a great honor to have been selected for the Cliff Shaw Memorial Award.—**K. F. Best**, Swift Current.

MRS. PRIESTLY REMEMBERED

I have enjoyed the last two issues of the **Blue Jay** very much. I specially enjoy the notes and letters from the readers for they remind me of Mrs. Priestly's large yellow-covered mimeographed **Blue Jay**.

Ruffed Grouse and Sharp-tailed Grouse and bluebirds have become very scarce in this area. The Mourning Doves still nest in our windbreak. The flat branches of the Colorado Spruce make excellent platforms for their poorly built nests. We always

have two or three hummingbirds around during midsummer. They love the petunias and if I stand perfectly still they will come so close that on one occasion the wings were brushing my dress. I have never found a nest but have seen young birds when they were not able to fly far and have watched them being fed.—**Mrs. A. Thompson**, Bangor.

MEMBERSHIP FEE

Please, let me urge, IF at all possible do not up the price of the **Blue Jay**. I quite realize that my \$2.00 can't begin to pay for it BUT on the other hand THIS is the organ that spreads knowledge—urges conservation—fills a need for the solitary worker who in his own little area is sort of a reference library. Our **Blue Jay** is frequently referred to by young lads who are interested in arrowheads, rocks, flowers, snakes. The boy who will search for information in the **Blue Jay** will be equipped to understand his natural heritage and in years to come will see to it that nature is preserved and conserved.—**Esther A. Clappison**, Rosedale, Alberta.

MORE FLYING SQUIRRELS

I read with much interest an article in the December, 1963, issue of the **Blue Jay** on "Records of the Northern Flying Squirrel in Saskatchewan." Several years ago I sighted flying squirrels here in the Tiger Hills district of southern Manitoba, about 40 miles southeast of Brandon. One day I found one in a trap which had been set for a weasel; I was very surprised as I had never seen them before. Just a year or so later (I am sorry that I do not have records of the date or year) I was chopping down a dead poplar tree which had several holes in the trunk; I had cut only a few notches in the tree when suddenly I noticed something pop out of one of the holes and start climbing the tree. I stopped chopping to see what it was, whereupon it jumped into space and glided across to a nearby oak tree. As it did not move from the oak tree I was able to have a good look at it and positively identify it as a flying squirrel. Since that sighting I have

never seen any more. I would like to know if there are other records of flying squirrels in this part of Manitoba.—E. J. "Bud" White, Margaret, Manitoba.

shafted Flicker made a hole in the side of a wooden granary and nested on top of the cats which were stored in the bin to a depth of about five feet—the eggs were placed right on top of the oats!



Laurie and Dennis Pennes with their lynx
(see page 35)

SOME UNUSUAL NEST SITES

William Jasper, Struan, Sask., sent us some recollections of unusual nest sites, e.g. a Common Grackle found its way into the broken top window of a high barn and made its nest on the trolley for the hay slings; at another time Sparrow Hawks used the same site; a Common Crow nested in a grain bin out in the field, using a shelf formed by a board which ran across the corner of the top plates—two young crows were just about ready to leave the nest; a Yellow-

MORE BANK SWALLOWS IN GRAVEL PILE

I was particularly interested in the reports in the **Blue Jay** (19:20, 84, 115) of Bank Swallows nesting in gravel stock-piles. On a short trip to Saskatchewan this summer (1963), I noticed at least three instances of this on Highway No. 14 between Yorkton and Leslie, which is a distance of less than 100 miles. One was near Theodore, another near Foam Lake, and the third was near Leslie. Although I had no opportunity to determine whether or not they were being used, I noticed a few swallows near the stock-pile at Foam Lake.—**Martin McNicholl**, Winnipeg, Manitoba.

SINGING CROWS AGAIN REPORTED

For the last three springs we have had a singing crow for awhile. I had no idea crows could sing and the first few times we heard the song (in 1961) we attributed it to blackbirds or other species, although we had not heard it before. Some starlings were building a nest in an old grain separator weigher box and the sound came from that direction, so one morning I took time off to find out if the starlings were the source of the singing. While in a partly hidden place watching the starlings I saw a crow alight on a nearby fence post and then perform as described by Lloyd M. Lohr in the March, 1963, issue of the **Blue Jay**, producing a most uncrow-like and musical song. After that time my wife and I both listened and watched and we could hear the crow every morning till it went farther north or somewhere else for the summer. We thought that maybe someone had partly tamed the crow. It was here again in the spring of 1962 and 1963, or at any rate we heard a crow singing each spring.—**G. K. Greene**, Elbow, Sask.

SNOWY OWL

Our first real snow storm of about eight inches came on December 7, 1963. We saw a Snowy Owl, a very dark one, on December 14. (Our range is: 1-3-16, West of 1st.) The Snowy Owl appears here every winter. I do not remember a winter when I have not seen them. My parents settled here in 1886, and these owls have been seen every winter since then.—**Ernest Fletcher**, Holmfield, Manitoba.

PRAIRIE CHICKEN OBSERVATIONS

I was interested in reading the account of the prairie chicken dance in the September issue of the **Blue Jay**. The accompanying photograph is the Dancing Hill, near Millwood, Manitoba. It got its name many years ago by the "Dances" the prairie chickens used to do each year. People used to come long distances to watch these performances. In those days the Pinnated Grouse were very numerous but I have not seen one of this species for quite a few years. This year I saw only two small broods of our Sharp-tailed Grouse, and these were a long distance apart. Prior to the First World War, sportsmen would come out from the villages and shoot 50 or 60 of these birds in a short while amongst the stooks of my half section. Some bachelors (and

others) used to trap them as they fed on the stacks of oat sheaves in the winter time. Likely the flocks were depleted in the dirty '30's for meat.—**Joseph H. Willis**, Binscarth, Manitoba.



Photo by J. H. Willis
Dancing Hill

OTHER LETTERS

The editors regret that there is not enough space in this issue for all of the interesting and informative letters which have come in. These are on hand and may be considered for the June issue.

SNHS Crest Contest

The Society wants an emblem that will be suitable for crests, badges, car stickers, etc. Have you a suggestion? If so submit a design to the Crest Contest.

Suggestions for Entries

1. The design should be simple and meaningful.
2. Any aspect of the Society's natural history activities or interests may be represented by the design.
3. The design should consist of three colours plus one complementary colour for the felt background.
4. It should not be larger than 4½ inches across.

5. Preferably, the name of the Society should be given in full rather than being represented by initials or abbreviations.
6. The copy submitted would be best drawn in india ink and coloured with water colours.

Do not let inexperience or concern about artistic talent keep you from entering the contest. The main aim is to get a good idea for a crest, simply executed. A professional artist can draw it up for later use.

Deadline for entries — **April 15, 1964.**

Send all entries to **SNHS Crest Contest, Box 1121, Regina, Sask.**

Summer Meeting, June 6-8, 1964

The 1964 SNHS Summer Meet offers an unusual weekend—a camp-out along the South Saskatchewan River near Beechy to study the area which will be submerged before long in the Saskatchewan River Reservoir. In order to plan accommodation in this area where facilities must be improvised the local programme convener, Doug Redley, must know by May 15th what people plan to come to the 1964 meet.

Camp Site: The camp site will be located in ranching country near Beechy, and directions for reaching the camp will be available at the Beechy Hotel. Some tents will be provided and pitched at the camp, with straw bales available for beds if needed. You should bring your own sleeping bags and/or blankets, flashlights, towels, and picnic gear (thermoses, etc.), and tents if possible.

Meals: Meals will be catered at the camp site—Friday evening “snack” at 7:00 p.m.; Saturday breakfast (7:30-8:30); Saturday noon meal (packed lunch for field trip); Saturday evening (cold dinner at camp at 7:00 p.m.); Sunday breakfast, and Sunday lunch for a small group if necessary. There will also be a concession offering chocolate bars, cigarettes, soft drinks.

Accommodation: At camp site, as above. Or, for those who do not wish to camp out, a choice of the following:

- (1) **Hotels** at Beechy, Demaine, Lucky Lake, Kyle (see road map).
- (2) Possibility of billets in private homes in Beechy.

PROGRAMME:

Friday evening, June 6

—registration, allocation of tents, campfire and sing-song.

Saturday, June 7

—“dew hike” (early morning birding, etc.).

—7:30-8:30, breakfast.

—all-day field trip, with packed lunches.

—return to camp for supper at 7:00.

—informal campfire get-together and review of day’s field trip.

Sunday, June 8

—group breakfast, followed by optional expeditions and hikes.

IMPORTANT—If you plan to attend, write to **Doug Redley, Slumber Dell Hotel, Swift Current**, before May 15. Please state preferences re: accommodation, the number in your party, and meals you will want at camp.

Supporting and Sustaining Memberships

As we go to press we have something like 70 **supporting members** and 35 **sustaining members** who have paid \$1 and \$3 extra respectively for their 1964 membership fee. They did this to help us, all of us, pursue those ideals of conservation which only an articulate and vigorous group can hope to bring to fruition. They know, as we all do, really, that we are not in existence simply to publish **The Blue Jay**, but to add our collective voice to the growing number of voices which are raised to protest any act of spoliation of our countryside, wildlife, and the rest of our natural resources. **The Blue Jay** is our organ of record and communication in this crusade. The better we can make our **Blue Jay** the better that tool will be.

How do we suitably express our appreciation of the extra “sinews of

war” donated by Supporting and Sustaining Members? A more vigorous pursuit of our goals will result, and no doubt each such member will take gratification that his extra helped. We feel though that they will also appreciate a practical expression of gratitude; we now offer each Supporting and Sustaining Member the privilege of a 10% discount on any purchase made by them since the date of their payments of their 1964 fees, through our **Blue Jay Bookshop**.

We ask all Regular Members to consider carefully joining the ranks of **Supporting and Sustaining Members**. If you are now a Regular Member for 1964 and can afford the extra \$1 or \$3, you may claim the discount by remitting the extra, now or at the time of your order. —F. Brazier.

THE SASKATCHEWAN NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

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BLUE JAY MAGAZINE

Editor: George F. Ledingham; **Assistant Editors:** Margaret Belcher and Robert W. Nero; **Junior Naturalists' Editor:** Joyce Deutscher.

MEMBERSHIP

Membership in the Saskatchewan Natural History Society is open to all persons interested in any aspect of nature. At the Annual Meeting of the Society, October 19, 1963, the following classes of membership were approved—**Regular**, \$2.00; **Supporting**, \$3.00; **Sustaining** \$5.00; **Junior** (including schools), \$1.00. The **Blue Jay** is sent without charge to all members not in arrears for dues.

The members at the Annual Meeting voted against raising the basic membership (including subscription to the **Blue Jay**) above \$2.00, but urged all those who can give additional assistance to the Society to become **supporting** or **sustaining** members.

Send all renewals and new memberships to Frank Brazier, **Blue Jay**, Box 1121, Regina, Sask.

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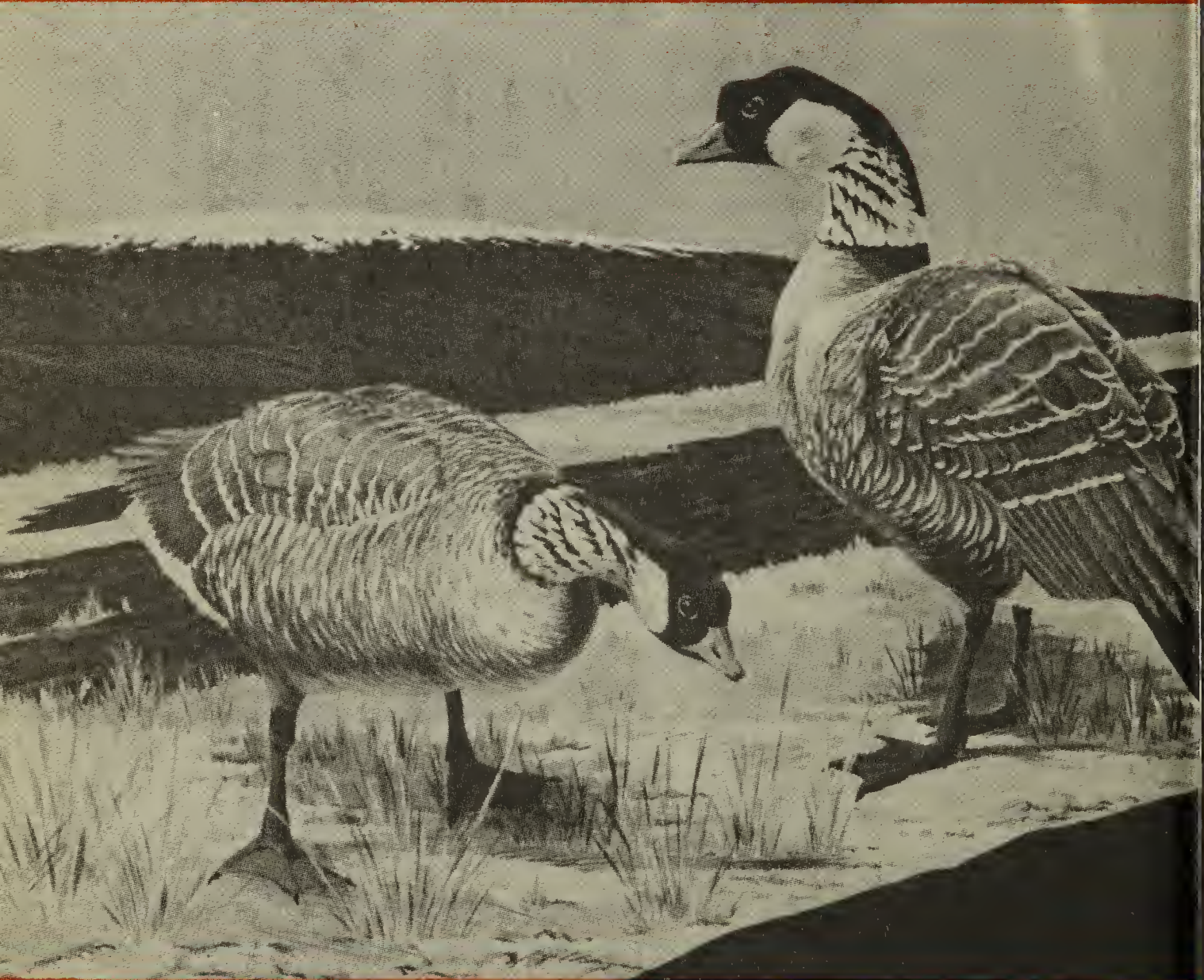
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Drawing by Stanley Stearns, Maryland
Nene Geese, the 1964-65 Migratory Bird Hunting Stamp (see page 38)

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